

THE
Life and Characters
OF
SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION

PRESENTED

TO THE HIGH PHILOSOPHICAL FACULTY

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF BASLE

TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR

BY

CHARLES EDWARD GOUGH

OF LEEDS.

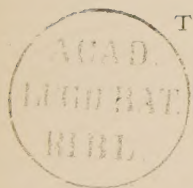
NORWICH

Printed by The East of England Printing Works

1909

THE
LIFE AND CHARACTERS
OF
SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
PRESENTED
TO THE HIGH PHILOSOPHICAL FACULTY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF BASLE
TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR



BY
CHARLES EDWARD GOUGH
OF LEEDS.

PRINTED BY
THE EAST OF ENGLAND PRINTING WORKS, NORWICH
1909

Genehmigt von der philologisch-historischen Abteilung der
philosophischen Fakultät auf Antrag der Herren Professoren Dr.
G. Binz und Dr. E. Tappolet.

Basel, den 29. Februar 1908.

PROFESSOR DR. F. SOMMER,
Dekan.

PRINTED PRIVATELY FOR
CHARLES EDWARD GOUGH

BY

THE EAST OF ENGLAND PRINTING WORKS, NORWICH, ENGLAND.

INTRODUCTION

AS the victim of the most infamous intrigue that ever disgraced the English Court, Sir Thomas Overbury is known to the many. To the few as a writer. To him belongs the honour of popularizing, if not of introducing, into English letters a new genre, that of "character-writing."

My attention was drawn to this branch of English Literature by Prof. F. Moorman, Ph.D., M.A. (Leeds), to whom my sincerest thanks are due for the interest he has taken in my work, and for the help he rendered me when collecting the material for this dissertation.

I am also much indebted to Prof. Dr. phil. G. Binz (Basle) for his many most valuable suggestions in connection with this paper, as well as for his aid and guidance during my studies in Basle.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

THE
LIFE AND CHARACTERS
OF
SIR THOMAS OVERBURY.

BY
CHARLES EDWARD GOUGH

PRINTED BY
THE EAST OF ENGLAND PRINTING WORKS, NORWICH
1909

TABLE OF CHIEF BOOKS REFERRED TO. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

- A. Addison. Cf. Steele.
Alden, R. M. *The Rise of Formal Satire in England under Classical Influence*, University of Pennsylvania, 1899.
- G. O. Amos : *Great Oyer of Poisoning*, London, 1846.
Borrow : *Romany Rye*.
Butler, S. Cf. Morley's "Character Writings."
Chapman. Cf. Mermaid Ed.
- D. Day. Cf. Mermaid Ed. (Nero and other Plays.)
Dekker : *Guls Horne-booke*, ed. Grosart. (Dekker ii.)
Dekker's plays ; cf. Mermaid Ed.
- Autob. D'Ewes, Sir Simon. *Autobiography* ; ed. Halliwell-Phillips, 1845.
- D. N. B. Dictionary of National Biography, vols. vii., ix., xlii., xlv.
Dodsley's Old Plays, London, 1744.
- Mic (Arber) Earle, J. *Micro-cosmographie*, Arber's Reprints, London, 1868.
Mic (T. C.) " " Dent's Temple Classics, London, 1899.
Mic (B-1) *Microcosmography, a Reprint of Dr. Bliss's Edition of 1811*, by S. T. Irwin.
Etherege, G. Comedies.
Field, N. Cf. Mermaid Ed. (Nero and other Plays).
Florio : *Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne*, Reprinted by H. Morley (Routledge), London.
Ford, T. Cf. Mermaid Ed.
- H. Gardiner, *History of England*, vol. ii.
Goadby, *England of Shakespeare*, Cassell & Co.
Hall, H., *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, Swan Sonnenschein, 1902.
Hall, J. "Characterisms" ; cf. Morley's "Character-Writings."
Halliwell : *Books of Characters*, London, 1857.
Healey : Translation of the Characters of Theophrastus, appended to Earle's *Micro-cosmographie*, Dent's Temple Classics, 1899.
Heywood. Cf. Mermaid Ed.
- Mic (T. C.) Hunt, Leigh. *Essays*, ed. A. Symons (W. Scott, London).
James I. (*Counterblaste to Tobacco*, etc.), ed. Rait. ("A Royal Rhetorician"), London, 1900.
- Jebb. Jebb, R. C. *Characters of Theophrastus*, Macmillan, 1870.
G-C. Jonson, Ben, Ed. by Gifford-Cunningham, 3 vols.
" " *Masques*, ed. Morley (Routledge, 1890).
Lupton, D. *London and the Countrey Carbonadoed*, etc., Lond. 1632.

TABLE OF CHIEF BOOKS, ETC.

- Manningham : *Diary*, ed. Bruce, Westminster, 1878.
 Massinger ; cf. Mermaid Ed.
- Nashe
 (M. K.) Mc Kerrow, R. B. *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 4 vols. A. H.
 M. Bullen, Lond., 1904.
 Mermaid Edition (*The best Plays of the Old Dramatists*). London,
 Fisher Unwin. Dramatists referred to : Beaumont and
 Fletcher (2 vols.), Chapman, Dekker, Ford, Massinger (2 vols.),
 Middleton (2 vols.), Webster.
- M. (Nero) Mermaid Edition ; *Nero and other Plays*. Dramatists referred
 to : Day, N. Field, H. Porter.
 Middleton. Cf. Mermaid Ed.
 Minto : *Manual of English Prose Literature*.
 More, Sir Th. *Utopia*, ed. Adams. (W. Scott, London.)
- C. W. Morley, H. *Character Writings of the Seventeenth Century*.
 Routledge, 1890.
 Morley, H. *Masques and Pastorals of Ben Jonson*, Routledge,
 1890.
- Oldham, J. *Works*, etc. Sixth Ed., London, 1703.
 Overbury ; *Wife and Characters*. Cf. Chapter ix.
 Porter, H. Cf. Mermaid Ed. (*Nero and other Plays*.)
- R. Rimbault : *The Misc. Works of Sir Th. Overbury*, London,
 Reeves and Turner, 1890.
- Shakespeare : ii. Henry IV., Winter's Tale, Hamlet, Tempest,
 Merchant.
- C. D. P. Shakespeare : *Jahrbuch d. deutsch. Shakesp. Ges.* xlii., 1906.
 State Papers : Calendars of Domestic Papers, 1600-1618.
- Steele : *The Tatler, Selected Essays*. (Warne's Chandos
 Classics.)
 Steele : *The Spectator*, do.
 Stephens, *Satyrical Essayes*, etc. London, 1615.
 „ *Essayes and Characters*, etc. London, 1615. Second
 Ed.
- S. S. Stowe : *Survey of London*, ed. H. Morley, Routledge, 1893.
 Swift. Cf. Steele.
- Thackeray : *Book of Snobs*.
 Webster. Cf. Mermaid Ed.
- A. O. Wood, A. *Athenae Oxonienses*. (Sec. Ed.), 1721.
- R. W. 1651 Wotton, H. *Reliquiae Wottonianae*, London, 1651.
- R. W. 1672] *Reliquiae Wottonianae*. Third Ed., London, 1672.

The titles of books to which rare allusions are made will be
 given in full.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. BIOGRAPHY OF SIR THOMAS OVERBURY. June (?) 1581—Sep. 15, 1613.	
Early life.	9
Friendship with Carr.	11
Court career.	11
Overbury's character.	12
Relations with Ben Jonson.	12
Overbury's opposition to the divorce of the Countess of Essex.	16
Imprisonment in the Tower, April 26, 1613.	18
Overbury poisoned.	21
Trial of the poisoners.	27
II. THEOPHRASTUS AND THE EARLIEST ENGLISH "CHARACTERISTS."	
Predecessors of the English "Characterists"; Chaucer 29, Nashe 29, Harman 30.	
Montaigne's Essays.	30
Casaubon's Latin translation (1598) of the "Characters" of Theophrastus; Healey's (first) English translation (1616).	31
Influence of Theophrastus on the earliest English "character-writers." On Ben Jonson 32, on Hall 34, on Overbury 38.	
Causes of popularity of "characters."	40
Overbury practically the first English "characterist."	41
Suggested arrangement of "Overbury's Characters."	44

CHAP.

PAGE

III. CHARACTERS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THEOPHRASTUS.

(a). "Dissembler," "Tymist," "Flatterer," "Intruder into fauour."	47
(b). "Melancholy Man," "Distaster of the Time."	49
(c). "Wise-man," "noble Spirit," "Noble and retir'd House-keeper."	50
"worthy Commander," "vaine-glorious Coward in Command."	52
"reuerend Iudge."	54
"excellent Actor," "Rimer."	56
"Franklin."	62
(d). Pettyfogger, Ingrosser of Corne, Vsurer, Couetous man, Creditour.	63
(e). Puritane, Precisian, Button-maker of Amsterdame; Iesuite; Hypocrite.	69
(f). affected Traueller, Almanacke-maker, Quacksaluer	73
(g). proud Man.	79
ignorant glory-hunter.	80
golden Asse, Improuident young Gallant, fine Gentleman, Courtier; Amorist.	81
Roaring Boy	86
Country Gentleman, elder Brother.	87
(h). old Man.	90
(i). Wotton's "Character of a happy life."	92

IV. "CHARACTERS" OF WOMEN.

(a). good Woman, good Wife—very Woman, Her next part	94
vertuous Widdow—ordinarie Widdow	103
(b). Milke-mayd—Chamber-maide	105
(c). Whoore, very Whore, Maquerela.	107

V. THE "TYPES."

In General.	108
(a). Scholer, Fellow(s) of a(n) House, Innes of Court man, Common Lawyer.	109
(b). Sarieant, His Yecoman, Prison, Prisoner, Iaylour.	113
(c). Puruieour of Tobacco	121

CONTENTS

7

CHAP.	PAGE
VI. OVERBURY'S CHARACTERS. GENERAL REMARKS.	
Style of "Overbury's Characters,"	124
Peculiarities of Overbury's own style.	125
Summary of Sources to which the "Characters" are indebted.	127
Catchwords borrowed from the "Duchess of Malfi"	131
VII. OVERBURY AND EARLE.	
"Overbury's Characters" the model of the Micro-cosmographie.	133
References to "Overbury" in Earle's "downe-right Scholler," "meere young Gentleman of the Vniuersitie," "Pretender to Learning," "good old Man."	134
Indebtedness to Overbury in the "Sergeant," "Shee-precise Hypocrite," "dull Phisitian," "Tobacco-seller"	140
List of Earle's "characters" containing passages similar to some in "Overbury's Characters"	145
Relative merits of Overbury and Earle	146
VIII. FINAL OUTGROWTHS OF "CHARACTER-WRITING."	
Great quantity of "characters" published between 1600 and 1670.	148
Nicholas Breton, D. Lupton, R. Flecknoe, Samuel Butler	149
"Characters" found in xviith century plays.	150
Political use of "characters" (from 1640). Butler's "character" of "A Duke of Bucks."	151
The "Caractères" of la Bruyère	153
History of "character-writing" in the xviii Century.	154
Addison and Steele's essays in the Tatler.	154
Further development in the Spectator.	156
The "Sir Roger de Coverley" essays.	157
"Character-writing" brought into the realm of the novel.	162
"Characterists" of the xix Century.	164
IX. LIST OF THE EDITIONS OF OVERBURY'S "CHARACTERS"	166

THE LIFE AND CHARACTERS OF SIR THOMAS OVERBURY

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

OF the life itself of Sir Thomas Overbury very little indeed is known; the main facts have been related by Anthony Wood in the *Athenae Oxonienses*; and though historians such as Gardiner have thoroughly worked out the scanty sources at their disposal,¹ few new facts have been brought to light.

I can only hope to recapitulate some of the chief events of Overbury's brief career, the tragic end of which elicited a veritable host of writings. Since at the trial of Overbury's murderers much evidence seems to have been suppressed, it will perhaps never be possible to ascertain the real truth² about the actual facts and the amount of guilt to be allotted to each of the accused. But writings concerning this trial, which was conducted in a manner offensive to our present ideas of justice, belong rather to the history of English Law than to literature. Therefore only the broadest outline of the trial proceedings will be

¹ The State Papers themselves cast very little light on Overbury's life up to April 21st, 1613, the day on which he was imprisoned in the Tower of London, though they provide the most important sources history possesses on the trial of the Somersets and their creatures.

² John Ford (born 1586), the dramatist, is said to have published a pamphlet (?) entitled "Sir Thomas Overbury's Life and untimely Death," which however is now lost. Besides Ford the Diarists of the time give accounts of the trial and the events leading up to it. Cf. Ford, M. p. vii. Middleton perhaps drew incidents for the plot of the "Changeling" from Overbury's poisoning. Cf. Jusserand: *Hist. litt. du peuple anglais*, Paris, 1904, p. 834, Note 2. (Vol. ii.)

needed; those in fact which throw light on the manner in which Overbury was done to death in the Tower.

The exact date of Overbury's birth is unknown.¹ Wood states² that "In *Michaelmas Term an. 1595*, he became a Gent. Commoner of *Queen's Coll.* in the year of his age 14." Therefore Overbury is supposed to have been born in 1581.

His father was Nicholas Overbury of Borton-on-the-Hill, near Morton-in-Marsh in Gloucestershire, a country gentleman, who is mentioned in connection with some land transactions in the State Papers (Vol. xv.), Oct 1st, 1605, and who was made "one of the Judges in *Wales* about that time,"³ viz. 1608, and was knighted⁴ in 1621.

Nicholas Overbury had married Mary, the "Daughter of Giles Palmer of Compton Scorfen (now Compton Scorpion) in the Parish of Ilmington in Warwickshire,"⁵ and their son was born at the house of his "Mother's Father."

According to Wood he was "educated partly in Grammar learning in those parts"⁶ (*i.e.* in Warwickshire or Gloucestershire). "In *Michaelmas Term an. 1595*, he became a Gent. Commoner of *Queen's Coll.* in the year of his age 14, where by the benefit of a good Tutor and severe discipline, he made great proficiency in Logic and Philosophy. In 1598 he, as a Squire's Son, took the degree of Bach. of Arts, which being compleated by *Determination* in the Lent following, he left the University, and settled for a time in the *Middle-Temple*, where he had before been entred in order to study the municipal Laws. Afterwards he travelled⁷ for a time, and returned a most accomplished

¹ The Registers of the Parish Church of Ilmington, near which town Overbury was born, only go back to 1588; he was baptised at Barton-on-the-Heath on June 18th, 1581.

² Cf. Wood's A. O. i. 388.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cf. D. N. B. xlii. 378.

⁵ A. O. i. 383.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Overbury travelled to Scotland in 1601, and in 1609 to the Netherlands, and it seems also to France. Cf. "Sir Thomas Overbury, His Observations in his Travailes vpon the State of the xvii Provinces as they stood Anno Dom. 1609," in his "Observations vpon the State of the Arch-Dukes Countrie, 1609," and Observations on the State of France, 1609. under Henry the Fourth." These writings, the authenticity of which is doubted, may be found in Rimbault's Ed. of Overbury's Works. (Reeves and Turner, 1890), pp. 221 ff, 231 ff, 234 ff.

Person, which the happiness of his Pen both in Poetry and Prose doth declare."

From 1603 Overbury's history cannot be severed from that of his friend Robert Ker or Carr, afterwards Viscount Rochester and Earl of Somerset, who was a younger son of Sir Thomas Ker of Ferniehurst and his second wife Janet, sister of Sir W. Scott of Buccleugh.¹ As a lad Robert had been page to James VI, afterwards travelled in France, and had according to Sir A. Weldon ("Court of King James") had the good fortune to break his arm in James' presence at a tilting match. He was knighted on Dec. 23rd, 1607, and to provide him with a fortune Sir W. Raleigh and his family were deprived of their estate of Sherbourne. When Lady Raleigh pleaded for her children, James replied "I mun have it for Carr."²

In 1601 Overbury was introduced in Edinborough to Carr by an Oxford friend, Sir W. Cornwallis.³ This friendship was renewed when Carr came to London in 1603. As Wood writes, "About the time of the Coronation of King James I, he [- Overbury] became familiar with Sir *Rob. Carre* Kt. of the *Bath*, who perceiving him to be a Person of good Parts and Abilities, and withal sober and studious, did take him nearer to him, and made him his Bosom Friend."⁴ But Overbury's nature was deeper than his friend's; he soon became Carr's adviser, or, as Queen Anne (of Denmark) termed it, his "governor" (*i.e.* tutor). The influence that Overbury exerted seemed to grow with the years, so that later "Some one or other told James that it was commonly reported that, whilst Rochester ruled the King, Overbury ruled Rochester."⁵

Through the influence of Carr the "Lease" was granted "to Tho. Overbury of twenty-five bullaries⁶ of salt water, with cribs, stalls, and other appurtenances in Droitwich,

¹ Cf. D. N. B. ix. 172 ff.

² Amos, G. O. 29.

³ D. N. B. xlii. 378.

⁴ A. O. i. 388.

⁵ Cf. Gardiner, H. ii. 177 or C. D. P. 1613-18 (April 29th, 1613).

⁶ Bullary, bullery=Boilery. Cf. Murray's Dict. pp. 1167 and 1168. First found 1542.

Worcestershire, parcel of the possessions of Robt. Winter, attainted.”¹ The King, who was importuned by Carr, knighted Overbury at Greenwich on June 19th, 1608. Carr seems to have obtained further favours for his friend, as an entry in the Calendar of the State Papers for Dec. 3rd, 1609, indicates: “The bill concerning Sir Thos. Overbury is signed, through the importunity of Sir Robert Carr.”² Possibly this “bill” procured for Overbury the office of “Sewer” to the King.

Sir Thomas was marked out for another appointment, which however he was never to fill. There is an entry in the State Papers (July 13th, 1615,) that “Sir Wm. Uvedale succeeds Sir Thos. Overbury in his reversion of the Treasurership of the Chamber.”³

The estimates of Overbury’s character are very contradictory. He seems to have possessed the art of making friends, but also, unhappily, of turning them too often into bitter enemies. He was ambitious, and of a haughty disposition; as Anthony Wood tells us “our Author *Overbury* . . . in learning and judgment excelled any of his years (which, as ’twas generally thought, made him while living in the Court to be proud, to overvalue himself, undervalue others, and affected, as ’twere with a kind of insolence) . . .”⁴ This would account for much of the enmity he stirred up against himself, but it must not be forgotten that a large portion of the hatred which existed in Court circles against the King’s favourite, his patron, would naturally reflect on Overbury.

That Overbury was a man of culture is seen from the enthusiastic poem written by Ben Jonson on him. It may be quoted here:

cxiii.—To Sir Thomas Overbury.⁵

So Phoebus make me worthy of his bays,
As but to speak thee, Overbury, is praise:

¹ C. D. P. Sep. 29, 1607.

² Ibid. p. 567. From the letter of Sir Thos. Lake to Salisbury.

³ C. D. P. 1611-18, p. 294.

⁴ Wood’s A. O. i. 389.

⁵ Cf. G-C. (Ben Jonson), iii. 252.

So where thou liv'st thou mak'st life understood,
Where, what makes others great, doth keep thee good !
I think the Fate of court thy coming craved,
That the wit there and manners might be saved :
For since, what ignorance, what pride is fled !
And letters and humanity in the stead !
Repent thee not of thy fair precedent,
Could make such men, and such a place repent :
Nor may any fear to lose of their degree,
Who in such ambition can but follow thee.

The date of the poem is unknown, but was prior to 1613, when the estrangement between Ben Jonson and Overbury took place. In our author's writings Jonson's influence is in several places rather marked. Overbury was evidently a fervid admirer of Ben, and probably associated with the intellectual men he met rather than with the shallow courtiers he ridiculed in his "Characters." By doing so, it would soon be said of him that he was prone to "overvalue himself, undervalue others." Overbury seems to have been a free-thinker, an unpardonable offence in the court of a king who prided himself on his theological knowledge. Probably Sir Thomas saw little to admire either in Catholicism, James' tenets, or Puritanism; in the Low Countries he had had opportunities of seeing the miseries and persecutions inflicted by both religious bodies on each other. Bacon hurled a fierce denunciation at Overbury, trying thereby indirectly to damage Somerset on his trial; but perhaps the Attorney General's statements about corruption may be discounted. He said "But the truth was, Overbury, who (to speak plainly) had little that was solid for religion or moral virtue, but was wholly possessed with ambition and vainglory, was loth to have any partners in the favour of my Lord of Somerset, and especially not any of the house of the Howards, against whom he had always professed hatred and opposition."¹ And a little further on "Overbury was naught and corrupt." It is to Overbury's credit that he resisted the powerful and unscrupulous

¹ Cf. Amos, G. O. 75.

Howard party, though he paid for his opposition with his life.

By William Drummond of Hawthornden a few statements Ben Jonson is said to have made about Overbury have been preserved. One of them is as follows: "He [*i.e.* Jonson] hath a pastorall intituled The May Lord. His own name is Alkin, Ethra the Countesse of Bedfoord's, Mogibell Overberry, the old Countesse of Suffolk ane inchanteress; other names are given to Somersett's Lady, Pembroke, the Countesse of Rutland, Lady Wroth. In his first storie, Alkin commeth in mending his broken pipe. *Contrary to all other pastoralls, he bringeth the clownes making mirth and foolish sports.*"¹ According to this Overbury still seemed to be playing an important part at court; the mention of "Somersett's Lady" is interesting, because during Overbury's life-time Carr, later Earl of Somerset, was unmarried. Whilst the divorce of Lady Frances Howard from her husband, Lord Essex, was proceeding, Overbury was in the Tower effectually silenced. Thus he could bear no part in the pastoral, nor yield material for its story, unless the play, which is lost, were written shortly before April 21st, 1613, the day of Overbury's commitment.

In this "pastorall" the Countess of Rutland² is also mentioned. Of her we read "The Countess of Rutland was nothing inferior to her Father Sir P. Sidney in poesie. Sir Th: Overburie was in love with her, and caused Ben to read his Wyffe to her, which he, with ane excellent grace, did, and praised the author. That the morne thereafter he discorded with Overburie, who would have him to intend a sute that was unlawful. The lines my Lady keep'd in remembrance, *He comes to[o] near who comes to be denied.*"³

¹ Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden, xvi. Cf. G-C. iii. 486-7.

² The Countess of Rutland was one of the most virtuous and accomplished women then living. She has been celebrated by Ben Jonson in his Epigrams (No. lxxix.), Forest (xii., Epistle To Elizabeth, Countess of Rutland) and also possibly Epigram lxxix. of the Underwoods.

³ Jonson's Conversations with Drummond of Hawthornden, xii.; G-C. iii. 480.

It was for her that Overbury had written his poem of the "Wife," probably early in 1613, but it was entered in the Stationer's Registers on Dec. 13th, 1613, some three months after Overbury's death. If an attack on Frances Howard had been planned in the "Wife," as some suppose, surely Overbury would not have drawn the portrait of his ideal of womanhood, but would have depicted a "meere Wife" or "bad Wife." Among his "Characters" are the "Very very Woman" and "Her next part." Possibly he was collecting the material for a future poem. The Countess of Rutland was very unhappy in her marriage.¹ By means of his poem Overbury tried to get her to interest herself in him. Perhaps he imagined that the Countess could be divorced from her husband, whom he hoped to replace. For this he had a precedent in the proposed line of action that his friend Rochester was about to adopt in reference to Lady Frances Howard.

Another allusion to Overbury is found in Ben Jonson's *Conversations with Wm. Drummond of Hawthornden* in the last passage of Chapter XI. It is as follows: "Overbury was first his friend, then turn'd his mortall enimie." This can only refer to a date subsequent to the occasion on which Ben Jonson read the "Wife" to the Countess of Rutland at Overbury's request. The cause of the hostility is to be found in the statement already quoted "That the morne thereafter he discor'ded with Overburie, who would have him to intend a sute that was unlawfull."

A passage in Manningham's *Diary* under date of Feb. 12, 1602, seems to have been misconstrued by Rimbault and Gifford-Cunningham. It runs thus: "Ben Johnson, the poet, nowe lives upon one Townesend and scornes the world. (Tho. Overbury)."² No quarrel need be implied between

¹ Cf. the quotation from Beaumont's *Elegy*, cited G-C. (Ben Jonson) iii. 480, or Dyce: Beaumont and Fletcher, xi. 508.

² Manningham's *Diary* (ed. Bruce, Westminster, 1878), p. 130. Rimbault reads "So Overbury," though Manningham usually added the name of the author of any statement quoted by him in brackets. "*So Overbury*" simply means "So (says) Overbury." But "Johnson . . . scornes the world" does not imply "Jonson . . . scorns the world, that is, he scorns Overbury."—

the poets. The dramatist was perhaps under a passing cloud and shunned society (and debts?). At any rate the passage gives no warrant for doubting that a real friendship existed between Overbury and Jonson from 1610 to 1613, as it was written at a date prior to Overbury's appearance at court.

In 1611 Carr had been created Viscount Rochester and had fallen in love with Frances Howard, the wife of the Earl of Essex. Overbury¹ aided him in obtaining the affections of this lady, and there seemed to be no secrets that Carr kept from him. But when Overbury heard that his friend was determined to marry Lady Essex after procuring for her a divorce from her husband, he was much alarmed. As Carr's mistress Overbury had nothing to fear from her or her relations, the Howards. But if she became Lady Rochester, he would not only lose his best friend, but, as Lady Frances would win her husband over to the Howard party, he would incur his hostility.² This meant absolute ruin for Overbury, because the other court factions, who all agreed in hating Rochester, would be able to vent their spleen on his discarded friend and adviser. In vain did Overbury warn Carr that a marriage with her "would not only be hurtful to his (*i.e.* Carr's) preferment, but helpful to subvert and overthrow him." In his passion he told his friend the sort of woman Frances Howard was, and since Carr had confided all her sayings and doings to Overbury, there was much unpalatable truth in the description.³ Rochester is said to have left his friend in anger, and to have informed Lady Essex of his conversation with Sir Thomas. From this moment Overbury was *doomed*. Both

The Diary also contains a few puns and statements attributed to Overbury, but nothing of historical value.

¹ Cf. Gardiner, H. ii. 176; also Wingood iii. 478.

² Cf. *ibid.* Also Bacon's statement that Overbury "was loth to have any partners in the favour of my Lord of Somerset."

³ Cf. C. D. P. Oct. 13, 1615. p. 315. "Examination of Hen. Peyton, servant to Overbury. . . . Overheard a conversation between his master and Rochester, whom he upbraided for intercourse with that base woman, the Countess of Essex, and said he would ruin himself by it, and he would leave him and stand alone. Rochester replied he could stand alone, and they parted in anger, and were not reconciled before Overbury's commitment."

Rochester and Lady Frances determined that he should be silenced during the divorce proceedings. Lady Essex however knew that her honour, or rather reputation, would not be safe as long as Overbury lived, and resolved to encompass his murder. But she was aware that Rochester would not consent to aid her in this undertaking against his friend.

When the Howards learnt that Rochester was desirous of marrying Lady Frances, they were naturally well pleased. Till then he had been their greatest opponent at court. The king, who doted on Carr, naturally favoured the granting of a divorce, although he himself was responsible for Essex' marriage with Frances Howard.

Robert Devereux, the third Earl of Essex, was baptised 22nd Jan., 1591. He was the son of the celebrated second earl, who was beheaded on Feb. 25th, 1601. His mother was Frances Walsingham, who was married first to Sir Philip Sidney, and after his death to Lord Essex, the "brother in arms and affection of her late husband."¹ In 1604 the Essex family, which had been degraded and impoverished by the attainder of the second earl in 1601, was restored to honour and rank by act of parliament. The king hoped to bring about a reconciliation between the families of Devereux and Howard by the means of a marriage.² Thus on Jan. 15th, 1606, Robert, then but fifteen years old, was espoused to Frances Howard, a younger daughter of the Earl of Suffolk. The bride's age was fourteen.³ To celebrate the happy event Ben Jonson had to produce the "Hymenæi; or the Solemnities of Masque and Barriers at a Marriage."⁴ After the wedding Essex was sent to complete his education by travelling abroad.⁵ On his return at the end of 1609 he found his wife unwilling to live with him. The next three years were filled with her

¹ Cf. H. Hall: *Society in the Elizab. Age*; Swan Sonnenschein, 1902. p. 91.

² Cf. Gardiner, H. ii. 166.

³ Gardiner makes both a year younger, Cf. *ibid*.

⁴ Cf. Ben Jonson (G-C. iii. 18 ff) or Morley: *Masques and Entertainments* by B. Jonson, Routledge, 1890, Introduction p. xxi.

⁵ Cf. Gardiner, H. ii. 167.

shifts to keep Essex away¹ and with her dealings with Carr.

On May 16th, 1613, the divorce proceedings were begun against Essex on account of his inability to beget children by Lady Frances, though to conciliate him and to obtain his acquiescence, without which the divorce would not be granted, it was admitted that he might be capable of obtaining children by other women.

The judges consisted of Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops King, Andrewes and Neile, also Sir Thomas Parry, Sir J. Caesar, Sir D. Dun, Sir J. Bennet, Dr. James and Dr. Edwards. The main argument was that Essex was bewitched. Lady Frances had to undergo an examination as to her virginity, and according to Amos² (who also quotes Weldon) the daughter of Sir Th. Monson acted as proxy, being thickly veiled to prevent detection. The whole proceedings were a farce; Abbot was the only judge who made any show of resisting James, the leading spirit in obtaining the divorce. But the archbishop made the mistake of doubting the powers of witchcraft³ instead of attacking the evidence, and was quickly put to right by that authority on magic, the Scottish Solomon.

Thus, on Sep. 25th, 1613, the absurd verdict was procured, not by the weight of the evidence produced, but by the openly declared partisanship of James, who thereby added greatly to his unpopularity among his English subjects. The judges became the objects of public ridicule.

But before the first meeting of this wonderful divorce court had been held, means had been found to imprison and effectually silence Overbury. Amongst the State Papers a letter⁴ of Sir Thomas Lake to Carleton dated May 19th (1613) contains the following statements: "Sir

¹ Essex was systematically drugged by Dr. Forman, a creature of Lady Frances, and by Mrs. Turner her confidante. Cf. Gardiner, H. ii. 168.

² Cf. Amos, G. O.—Wilson, the friend of Essex, confirmed the story. Cf. also Rimbault, Overbury's Works, London 1890, p. xl. Weldon is however not always trustworthy, and the whole episode would be incredible, if it were not in keeping with the marvellous methods employed to obtain the desired divorce.

³ Cf. Gardiner, H. ii. 171, 2.

⁴ C. D. P. 1611-18, p. 185.

Thos. Overbury is sent to the Tower for saying he could not and would not accept a foreign employment. The King has long wanted to get rid of him at Court. Sir Robt. Killigrew committed for holding intercourse with Overbury in prison. Sir Wm. Waad removed from the lieutenancy of the Tower; his daughter imprisoned, and others examined relative to offences committed there." The actual date of Overbury's commitment was April 26th. "About six o'clock in the evening, Sir Thomas Overbury was from the council-chamber conveyed by a clerk of the council and two of the guard to the Tower, and there by warrant consigned to the lieutenant as close prisoner."¹ The destination of the embassy offered by Ellesmere and Pembroke to Overbury is unknown.² But this foreign appointment virtually meant banishment. Overbury, privately advised by Rochester to refuse the offer, had several reasons of his own for so doing. He saw in it a plot laid by the king and the Howards to remove him from England, and thus to disable him from interfering in the divorce proceedings. But doubtless Overbury must have suspected ulterior motives for this banishment. From abroad he could write to the judges, and thus provide them (with almost greater ease than in personal interviews) with the information he possessed concerning the profligate lady. Overbury was aware that his life would be forfeit if he left his country. Should he be murdered in a strange land nobody would suspect the Howards; in England, as actually happened, men would soon be able to point out the instigators of the crime. Overbury therefore placed his reliance on Rochester, who had "dissuaded Overbury from going

¹ D. N. B. xlii. 379. Also C. D. P. 1611-18, p. 181, where one reads: "The King, desiring to falsify the report that Rochester ruled him, and Overbury, Rochester, determined to remove Overbury. Some foreign embassy was pressed upon him, which he positively declined, saying the King could not in law or justice compel him to leave his country; for which contempt he was sent to the Tower. The King declares this is no slight on Rochester, in whose conversation he delights more than in any man's living."

² It may have been Russia; perhaps the Netherlands. But the destination of the embassy is immaterial. The offer was not made seriously. However cf. entry quoted in next footnote.

to Russia to serve the King as requested, promising to save him from any mischief for refusal." ¹ Carr still pretended, or perhaps even felt friendship for his unhappy quondam adviser. ²

Furthermore Overbury knew that the king disliked him. However, if he accepted the embassy he would lose touch with Rochester, and thereby destroy his own prospects of success. Another impulse, which seems to have been overlooked, is to be traced to Overbury's love for the Countess of Rutland. He foresaw Rochester's success in obtaining Lady Frances Howard for his wife. May not Carr have held out to Overbury the hope of the accomplishment of a similar union with the Countess of Rutland as the price of his silence? Of the legality of James' action in committing Overbury to the Tower little need be said. It was in itself not worse than the king's interference in the divorce proceedings and later in Somerset's trial. James imagined that everyone who "did not love him" or fall into line with all his wishes, was a traitor to his country. Justice was to James another name for the gratification of his own desires.

Scarcely was Overbury in the Tower when steps were taken by the Howards to remove Sir Wm. Waad, the lieutenant, from his post. ³ A letter from Killigrew, as we have seen, had been received by Overbury. Therefore it was

¹ C. D. P. Sep. (?) 1615, p. 307.

² There is no convincing evidence to show that Rochester was implicated in the plot to rob Overbury of his life. In fact his letters would seem to indicate a hope of keeping Overbury as his friend even after his marriage. But it was necessary that Overbury should not prevent Lady Frances Howard obtaining the decree nullifying her marriage with Essex.

³ Waad was accused of embezzling jewels from Lady Arabella Stuart (cf. C. D. P., May 13th, 1613, p. 183). Mr. Sidney Lee, the biographer of Overbury, describes Waad as "a man of unbending virtue, from whom it was hopeless for the Howards to expect any help." (Cf. D. N. B. xlii. 379).—Following entry is found in the C. D. P. 1611-18, p. 307, and is dated Sep. (?) 1615. "Account [by Sir Wm. Waad] of his dismissal from the lieutenancy of the Tower, on accusation of too great indulgence to the prisoners, especially Sir Thos. Overbury, although he had refused all access to him, even to the Earl of Somerset's servants; but seeing him ill, he had wished him to have a servant attend him, which was refused." This of course is the true explanation of Waad's dismissal. Somerset wished to correspond with Overbury, to the exclusion of all others. Lady Frances desired her poisons to reach him. Neither could succeed as long as Waad was lieutenant of the Tower.

still possible for the prisoner to correspond with his friends, and in that case Overbury would be almost as dangerous to the intriguers, as if he were free.

The next governor, Sir Gervas(e) Helwys of Lincolnshire, was a creature of the Howards. Already before Overbury's commitment Lady Frances and her confidante Mrs. Turner had sought means to take Overbury's life. They had approached Sir Davy Wood,¹ and offered him £1000 if he would kill Overbury. But Wood insisted on having a pardon given him by Rochester before he committed the murder. As Lady Essex did not dare inform her future husband of her plans concerning Overbury, this affair came to nothing. But now that Overbury was in the Tower, and Helwys was lieutenant, the two women determined to have the object of their hatred poisoned.

By the influence of her grand-uncle, Lord Northampton, Lady Frances caused Helwys to replace Overbury's jailor by a certain Richard Weston,² a doubtful character, who had once served a term of imprisonment for coining. This man was paid by the Countess to mix poisons in Overbury's food, and to convey to him tarts she had drugged. According to Amos (*The Great Oyer of Poisoning*) Lady Essex obtained by the means of Mrs. Turner "arsenic, aqua fortis, mercury, powder of diamonds, lapis costitus, great spiders and cantharides" from an apothecary named Franklin. But it is extremely doubtful if any of these

¹ Cf. C. D. P. Oct. 21st, 1615, p. 319. "Examination of Sir David Wood. Was crossed by Rochester and Overbury, because Rochester would not procure for him a suit worth £2200, unless he might have £1200. The Countess of Essex offered him £1000 if he would revenge himself and her on Overbury. He said he would be hangman to nobody, nor go to Tyburn at a woman's word; but if Rochester would promise him, before a witness, to protect him if he were intercepted, he would be the readier for her sake to give him knocks. She said this could not be done, but he might be killed coming late home from Sir Chs. Wilmot's."

² Cf. C. D. P. Sep. (?) 1615, p. 307. "Sir Gervase Helwys admitted Rich. Weston to attend Overbury, on the recommendation of Sir Thos. Monson. It was commonly reported in the Tower that he was murdered. His brother-in-law was not allowed to see him when dying, nor his body to be brought out of the Tower. Somerset dissuaded Overbury from going to Russia to serve the King, as requested, promising to save him from any mischief for refusal."

poisons ever reached Overbury. Weston on his trial denied giving any to his prisoner,¹ but admitted that he had received money for doing so.² If one considers that Overbury was in ill-health on entering the Tower, and that Weston guarded him more than three months, one cannot conceive by what miracle Overbury's constitution could have so long withstood the effects of such virulent poisons if administered even once, much less daily.

After Waad's dismissal from the Lieutenancy, Rochester was able to correspond with Overbury, who bitterly complained of his ill-health in a letter still preserved (Harl. MS. 7002) and partially reprinted by Rimbault (Overbury's Works, LI.). Desiring to obtain for his friend greater freedom of movement, and perhaps to guard him against any poisons that might be prepared for him by his enemies, Rochester sent powders³ that would cause Overbury to be

¹ Cf. letter from Helwys to the King. (C. D. P. Sep. 10th, 1615, p. 307): "Found that Weston was intending to poison Overbury, and so terrified him that he had him at his service to deceive those who sent the poisons, by pretending to administer them, but not doing so. At length Overbury being ill, Weston confessed that the apothecary's servant was corrupted to poison him with a glistre. Knows none but Weston and Mrs. Turner who were actors in it. Interviews between her and Weston, when the cause of his death was called in question, in July last."—Unlike much of the evidence produced at the trials of the murderers Helwys' statement remains fairly close to the actual facts. It is borne out by Weston's testimony. Coke, armed with all the terrors the law then possessed, could not get Weston to make any contradictory statements.

² Cf. C. D. P. Oct. 2nd, 1615, p. 311. "Examination of Rich. Weston. Was urged by the Countess of Essex to give poisoned water to Sir Thos. Overbury, but, mentioning his purpose to the Lieutenant of the Tower, was terrified by his rebukes, and threw the water away. Afterwards gave him tarts, jellies, etc. sent him by the Earl of Somerset; £20 was offered to an apothecary to give him a glistre, but the Lieutenant would allow no one to do it but his own apothecary. Rewards given or promised him by Lady Essex. Has received £180 from her, through Mrs. Turner, etc." Evidence collected Oct. 1 and 2. *ibid.*

³ Cf. the evidence of Giles Rawlins, one of Rochester's servants, C. D. P. Oct. (?) 1615, p. 313: "Took Overbury a powder, which he had from Sir Robt. Killigrew, and which was sent by Rochester, on pretence that it would make him sick, and afford an excuse for requesting his freedom. Another vomit was sent by Rochester through Lawrence Davies (servant to Overbury). Weston had an interview with Rochester, after Overbury's death, having promised Overbury to return him a certain letter with a powder in it."

N.B. Coke, who extracted this evidence, was endeavouring to collect material to procure Somerset's conviction for the murder of Overbury. An act of kindness on Rochester's part seemed to the Chief Justice a mere attempt at poisoning.

sick, so as to obtain a satisfactory reason for having his health watched over by a doctor. The letters in which the emetics were enclosed seem to have been smuggled in by Overbury's domestic, or hidden in pastry that Rochester sent his friend.

When it became known that Overbury had been poisoned, Rochester, then Earl of Somerset, was afraid that his conveyance of powders to the prisoner would be interpreted as an attempt to poison him.¹ He tried to hide the traces of this act, and also to falsify the dates of his correspondence, which was exceedingly foolish, as it only served further to incriminate him.

Overbury's letter had the result that Dr. Nessmith and Dr. Crag examined his state of health, and at the end of August he was visited by Paul de Lobell, who diagnosed his case as consumption. A letter (in French) from Dr. Theo. De Mayerne, the King's Physician, to Rochester dated Aug. 31st, 1613, is preserved among the State Papers,² in which the doctor states that he "understands the prisoner (Sir Thos. Overbury) is ill, and vomits; can do but little for him at a distance."

Overbury seems to have suspected that poison was the cause of his sufferings. Dr. Fras. Anthony admitted that he and his wife had twice sold aurum potable to a servant of Overbury, while he was in the Tower, as an antidote for poison.³ But perhaps the medicines prescribed or acquired wrought greater havoc with his constitution than any poisons procured for him by Mrs. Turner.

Although sinking rapidly, Overbury was not dying quickly enough to please Lady Essex. Therefore on Sep. 14th a

¹ Cf. C. D. P. Oct. 6th, 1615, p. 314. "Examination of R. Weston. Conveyed letters, and was privy to secret meetings between the Countess of Essex and Lord Rochester, at Mrs. Turner's and elsewhere. Delivered letters from Rochester to Overbury, but none with any powder in them. Did not take back any powder to Rochester after Overbury's death."—The trial of the Somersets was known as the "Powder Plot." If the Countess of Essex had feared to betray to Rochester her desire of having Overbury murdered by Wood, she could scarcely have won her lover over in the few weeks which had passed to take an active share in poisoning Sir Thomas.

² Cf. C. D. P. 1611-18, p. 198.

³ Cf. C. D. P. Oct. 29, 1615, p. 323.

clyster of sublimate was applied to Overbury by "William," an apprentice of de Lobell,¹ and at five o'clock next morning the tortured man died.

This William disappeared from London almost immediately, and fled to the Continent. He had probably been bribed to inject poison.² Anyhow it is by no means impossible Mayerne had been won over by the all-powerful Howard faction to prescribe a violent remedy, that would rid England of that "scab," as Lady Frances called Overbury. Mayerne (1573-1655) had been "médecin ordinaire du roi Henri IV.," and left Paris to become Court Physician to James. At Paris the medical faculty disapproved of his methods: "il ouvrit des cours publics pour les jeunes chirurgiens et apothicaires. La faculté vit avec beaucoup de peine cet impiètemment sur ses droits; mais ce qui acheva de perdre Mayerne dans l'esprit des ses confrères, c'est qu'il faisait un grand usage, dans sa pratique, des remèdes et des préparations chimiques, que la faculté réprouvait comme de dangereuses innovations."³

An inquest was held immediately after Overbury's death. His body "was worn to skin and bone; an ulcer and blisters (were) found on it."⁴ The coroner's jury, consisting of prisoners and warders, gave a verdict of death from natural causes.⁵ But Helwys, the Lieutenant of the Tower, confessed that "after Overbury's death Lord Northampton

¹ Ibid. Nov. 9, 1615, p. 326. "Examination of Edw. Ryder. Early in October, saw Dr. Lobell, who spoke hardly against those who tried to prove that Overbury was poisoned, declared that he died of consumption, caused by melancholy, and that the glisten, prepared by his son, was made by order of Dr. Mayerne, who was the only physician in England worth anything. Saw Lobell a week later, and told him it was now manifest that he was poisoned by an apothecary's boy in Lime Street. Madame Lobell explained to her husband, 'That must be William, whom you sent into France'; on which he trembled violently, and said, that as William was leaving his master, he gave him a letter of recommendation to Paris."

² Cf. C. D. P. Oct. 2nd, 1615, p. 311. Cited ante, p. 22 note 2.

³ Biogr. Universelle xxvii. 624. Mayerne and Lobell were associated. It is strange, though the clyster was known to contain an overdose of sublimate, Lobell got off scot-free. Nor can I find in the State Papers that Mayerne was obliged to state what ingredients he had prescribed.

One almost feels inclined to ask if Mayerne knew the cause of Gabrielle D'Estrée's death, which took place Apr. 10th, 1599.

⁴ Cf. C. D. P. Oct. 1st, 1615, p. 311.

⁵ Autob. of Sir S. D'Ewes, p. 77.

wrote to him to send for Sir John Lidcott (Overbury's brother-in-law) to see his body, in order to "satisfy that damned crew who would be ready to speak the worst," and then to bury him shortly.¹ Overbury's corpse, owing to the condition it was in, "is said to have been thrown in a loose sheet into a coffin, and buried privately on Tower Hill."²

Anthony Wood makes a mistake in the actual date of Overbury's death. He states: "He [=Overbury] yielded up his last breath, occasioned by Poison, as I have before told you, on the 13 *Sept.* in sixteen hundred and thirteen, and was buried, as some Authors say, *presently and very unreverently in a pit digged in an obscure and mean place.* But the Register of the *Tower-Chappel*, dedicated to *S. Peter ad vincula*, saith he was buried in the said Chappel 15 *Sept. an.* 1613. as I have been informed by the Letters of that learned Gent. Sir *Edw. Sherburne* Knight, late Clerk of his Maj. Ordnance and Armories within the Kingdom of *England.*"³

It is doubtful whether Overbury was buried in the Tower Chapel; the register only states: "1613. Sir Thomas Overbury, prisoned, poysoned, buried the XVth. Sept." This entry could not have been made before 1615, as the word "poysoned" shows. Though the Guide, and a (modern) tablet in the Chapel both declare that Overbury was buried in the Tower, there are sufficient grounds for questioning their statement. Firstly the Chapel is very small, and could not contain the graves of all those who died in the Tower from 1550-1613; secondly there were two grave-yards; and thirdly, Helwys would scarcely have accorded Overbury the honour of a burial in so privileged a spot, especially if the haste of the interment and a natural desire to make exhumation difficult is taken into consideration. Overbury's parents were refused the sight of their son's corpse; those concerned in the murder would scarcely feel inclined to point out the place where they had

¹ C. D. P. Nov. 18, 1615, p. 331.

² Autob. (D'Ewes), p. 77, Footnote.

³ A. O. i. 389.

buried him. Before justice overtook the poisoners two years had elapsed, during which time the exact spot of Overbury's grave was forgotten.

Though vague rumours were current that Overbury had been murdered, the divorce of Lady Frances from her husband was obtained, and on Dec. 26th, 1613, in almost regal pomp she was married to Carr, who on Nov. 3rd had been created Earl of Somerset. The death of Northampton on June 30th, 1614, gave to the king's favourite the exercise of the greatest power he ever enjoyed. But a new star had arisen at court in the person of George Villiers, who afterwards became the all-powerful Duke of Buckingham. Somerset did not like another sharing the king's favour with him and became querulous. In vain did James remonstrate with him. But Somerset's fall was at hand. One of his many enemies had brought information of the poisoning of Overbury to Sir R. Winwood, the Secretary of State, and soon after Helwys confessed his share in the crime. In the Autobiography of Sir Simon D'Ewes,¹ the discovery of the poisoning is vividly pictured. "It came first to light by a strange accident—of Sir Ralph Winwood Knt., one of the Secretaries of State his dining with Sir Jervis Elvis, Lieutenant of the said Tower, at a great man's (the Earl of Shrewsbury's) table, not far from Whitehall. For that great man, commending the same Sir Jervis to Sir Ralph Winwood as a person in respect of his many good qualities very worthy of his acquaintance, Sir Ralph answered him, that he should willingly embrace his acquaintance, but that he could first wish he had cleared himself of a foul suspicion the world generally conceived of him, touching the death of Sir Thomas Overbury. As soon as Sir Jervis heard that, being very ambitious of the Secretary's friendship, he took occasion to enter into private conference with him, and therein to excuse himself to have been enforced to connive at the said murder, with much abhorring of it. He confessed the whole circumstance of

¹ pp. 68, 69.

the execution of it in general, and the instruments to have been set on work by Robert Earl of Somerset and his wife."

I do not propose to go into the details of the trials of Overbury's poisoners, as these are outside the scope of this sketch. Weston's expectation that the judges would "make a net to catch the little fishes, and let the great go" was realised.¹ He was hanged; so was Mrs. Turner. The latter at her execution wore the yellow ruff she had brought into fashion, which is frequently referred to in plays written about 1616. She confessed her guilt,² exclaimed against the court, and wished the King better servants, there being nothing among them "but mallice, pride, whoredom, swearing, and reioising in the fall of others." Franklin,³ the apothecary who supplied her with the poisons, was also executed, having admitted his guilt.

But the only man of note who suffered death was Sir Gervase Helwys, who had connived at the murder for fear of angering the Howards.⁴ He knew attempts were being made to poison Overbury, but did not displace Weston. He showed his consciousness of guilt, when he refused to hand Overbury's corpse over to his relations for burial. Helwys⁵ was executed on Tower Hill on Nov. 19th, 1615.

The Countess of Somerset, the author of all this evil, was tried by a court of peers presided over by Lord Chancellor Ellesmere. She pleaded guilty. Her behaviour at her trial was modest. The verdict was unanimous, and she was sentenced to death. But she begged for life, and the judges assured her, that the Lords would intercede on her behalf.

Northampton,⁶ who seems to have had a knowledge of the poisoning, and perhaps had aided his grand-niece, died before the facts of the murder became manifest.

Somerset at first refused to appear before a Court of

¹ Cf. C. D. P. 1611-18, p. 320.

² Cf. C. D. P. Nov. 10th and 11th, 1615, p. 327.

³ For Franklin's share in the plot cf. C. D. P. 1615, entries of Nov. 27, 28, pp. 333, 4.

⁴ Cf. C. D. P. 1615; Nov. 18th, p. 331.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Cf. ante p. 21 and footnote 2; also p. 25 and footnote 1.

Justice, but at the last moment determined to plead "not guilty," and to defend himself without the aid of counsel. His defence was on the whole very able, but, however plausible or eloquent he may have been, an adverse decision of his judges was inevitable. Coke, who in 300 examinations of the accused persons had prepared the evidence, had proclaimed them guilty from his judgment seat before their trial! The Lords met in the same spirit, for all bore grudges against the fallen favourite. After hearing Bacon's prosecution (conducted in a manner that seems the height of injustice to a modern mind) and listening to Somerset's plea, they unanimously condemned him to death.

James, who had feared that Somerset would blurt out unpleasant truths,¹ showed the greatest nervousness during Carr's trial. It is not quite impossible that he knew that Overbury's death had resulted from poison long before Sir Ralph Winwood and Coke began to hunt the murderers down. Mayerne was his physician; he had prescribed for Overbury without having seen him, and his prescription appears to have been the direct cause of Sir Thomas' death.

Needless to say that Somerset and his wife were both pardoned, after a considerable term of imprisonment.² But neither was received by James at court again. Carr died in July, 1645, having lost his wife on Aug. 23rd, 1632. Their only child, Ann, born whilst Lady Frances was awaiting her trial, married Lord William Russell.

¹ Cf. C. D. P. 1611-18, p. 370.

² In Jan. 1622 they were permitted to leave the Tower.

CHAPTER II

THEOPHRASTUS AND THE EARLIEST ENGLISH "CHARACTERISTS"

THE writing of short humorous essays descriptive of different types of human character forms a very marked feature of English letters in the seventeenth century, although this special branch of literature was not unknown before and certainly exists at the present day. However, not every effort to portray some peculiar individuality may be considered a "character"¹ in the narrower sense of the word, for this endeavours to depict tersely, and if possible, wittily, the action of some prominent trait, say a firmly implanted virtue or perhaps a ruling vice, on the words and deeds of all men who come under its influence. Not the character, or more accurately, the description of the *individual* is attempted, but rather a generalization of the results of a certain moral influence on men as a whole.

The earliest successful delineation of different types of men and women to be found in English literature is met with in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*. But Chaucer was not endeavouring to write "characters" as a special genre of letters; his aim was to introduce his readers to the

"companye
Of sondry folk, by adventure y-falle,
In felawshipe."

In Nashe's "Pierce Penilesse His Svypplication To The Divell" several kinds of men are portrayed. Again, in this

¹ It must not be forgotten that the ideals of the genuine character-sketch soon became indistinct. Later outgrowths, such as the descriptions of striking peculiarities possessed by many individuals in the same walk of life (such as lawyers, students, or fellows of the universities), or on the other hand the "characters" of inanimate things (prisons, for instance), mark a process of degeneration of the "character" *per se* to the descriptive essay.

book, there is no deliberate attempt to write "characters" as such; those that occur serve only as examples to illustrate the theme of the work, viz., that in this thankless world none but knaves and fools thrive. However, some of the figures drawn by Nashe have afforded, as we shall later see,¹ material to the "characterists."

Harman's "Caueat or Warening for Common Cursitors" (1567) is considered by some² to be the predecessor of the books of "characters" that followed each other in quick succession some forty years later. But, much as in the case of Nashe, the character-sketches were not written for their own sakes, so much as (in this instance) to give an insight into the rogueries practised by the "Vagabones."

Though not of native growth, another author must be mentioned before entering on the history of English character-writing. Florio had in 1603 translated the "Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne," which soon found a second home in England. These Essays³ cannot be considered "characters" in any sense. Though starting usually from self-analysis Montaigne shows in a rambling manner the action of certain motives on men's minds, and illustrates his points by examples culled mostly from Antiquity or French History. Now the "characterists," at first at any rate, preferred to generalize. They attempted to outline the type of men possessing some quality in an eminent degree rather than to show in anecdotes the influence exerted by this or that impulse on some certain individual's acts.

The impetus to write such "characters" was given

¹ Cf. "Traueller," p. 74 ff. and "excellent Actor," p. 57 ff.

² By Bliss, cf. *Mic.* (B-I) p. 219 ff. Morley follows Bliss (cf. C.W. 17 ff). Surely, if Harman's descriptions are considered "characters," all books containing such—the *Guls Horne-booke*, for instance—must be included in the list.

³ In "Overbury's Characters" very little may be traced back with any probability to Montaigne. Borrowed passages are referred to as follows: p. 45, note 2; p. 50, note 1; p. 86, note 3.

by the publication in 1598 of Casaubon's "Characters of Theophrastus"¹ with a Latin translation. The influence of this book on English authors of learning, on Hall, Ben Jonson, and later Earle, was very great, but much less on the Overbury group, as will be shown presently.

The first English translation² of Theophrastus was made by John Healey, and appeared in 1616, six years after the translator's death. Though vigorous and free as a rendering, it is often faulty. It was probably ignored by the erudite writers mentioned above, and appeared too late to have been utilized by Overbury himself, though contributors to his "Characters" in impressions later than the seventh may have been acquainted with Healey's book.

Of the "Characters of Theophrastus" only the first 28 were known to the seventeenth century writers. There are 30 MSS. of Theophrastus still extant, of which the only complete one, P. Vat. (Jebb), Palatinus (Foss), or Vaticanus (Ussing) was discovered as recently as 1786, and was considered spurious till its genuineness was established by Foss in 1834-36. This MS. contains two "characters" ("The Oligarch" and "The Patron of Rascals," as Jebb calls them), which are not included in any of the other copies. But it is interesting to note that these two mark a similar departure from delineation of character pure and simple. They depict traits in men of a special class, such as later one finds in the Traveller, Scholar, Soldier, etc.

Without going into the thorny question of the original form in which the "Characters" were written (for instance, whether they are extracts from a lost work on ethics by Theophrastus, or formed an independent book) it is noticeable that no "characters" of virtuous men or of women have been handed down to us. Whenever there is need of extracts from Theophrastus, the translation of the

¹ Theophrastus was born circa B.C. 373. He died about 284 B.C.

² Reprinted as Appendix to Earle's *Microcosmographie*, London, 1899, in Dent's Temple Classics.

late Prof. Jebb¹ will be made use of, since his book offers an exact translation, having the Greek text, carefully edited, opposite for sake of reference.

The first English imitator of Theophrastus is Ben Jonson, who not only affixed short "characters" describing the "Dramatis Personae" to his comedy "Every Man out of his Humour"² (acted already in 1599 by the "Lord Chamberlain's servants") but he included character-sketches in "Cynthia's Revels" (first published in quarto 1601) and in "The New Inn."³ In "Cynthia's Revels" we have the character of Hedon,⁴ the courtier (Act ii. Sc. 1), discussed by Cupid and Mercury, and of Anaides,⁵ a "Roarer," a little further on. Later in the same scene the character of Asotus,⁶ the traveller, is discussed, and then that of the judicious Crites.⁷ Lady Argurion,⁸ the character of money; Madame Moria,⁹ "a lady made all of voice and air, talks anything of anything"; and finally Madam Philautia¹⁰—"a most complete lady in the

¹ "The Characters of Theophrastus," by R. C. Jebb, Macmillan 1870. However the text is expurgated. The complete text has been edited by Edmonds and Austen: *Characters of Theophrastus*; London, Blackie & Son, 1904.

² Cf. "The Character of the Persons" after the *Dramatis Personae*, *Every Man out of his Humour*, G-C. i. pp. 62, 63, 64.

³ "As it was never Acted, but most negligently Played by some of the King's Servants; and more squeamishly beheld and censured by others, the King's Subjects, 1629." Cf. G-C. ii. p. 335. Though I mention the "New Inn," the "characters" appearing in its "Dramatis Personae" were of course written long after the "Characters" of Overbury had appeared. Baldwin, in an article called "Ben Jonson's indebtedness to the Greek character-sketch," *Mod. Lang. Notes* xvi. 385-396, also draws attention to Jonson's indebtedness in "Epicæne" to Libanius' character-sketch "A rhetorical declamation" on the subject "A morose man, who has married a talkative wife, denounces himself." Though first acted in 1609 the "Silent Woman" seems to have been entirely overlooked by the writers of "Overbury's Characters." Strange to say, in some eleven "characters" of women the only reference to their loquacity is to be found in the *Very Woman*, Her next part:

"Shee trauels to and among, and so becomes a woman of good entertainment, for all the folly in the country comes in cleane linnen to visit her; shee breakes to them her grieffe in sugar cakes, and receives from their mouthes in exchange, many stories that conclude to no purpose."

⁴ G-C. i. 157.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 159.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 161.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 161-162.

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 162.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 162-163.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 163.

opinion of some three beside herself." These are the three female characters which act as pendants to Hedon, Anaides and Asotus. That Ben Jonson should have interspersed "characters" in the style of Theophrastus in the above mentioned plays is not surprising, if his knowledge of the classics and his love of turning it to account in his dramas is taken into consideration. But occasionally we find passages in Ben Jonson's works which might almost be taken as actual translations from Theophrastus. For instance Mosca's monologue in *Volpone* iii. 1 :

" All the wise world is little else, in nature,
But parasites or sub-parasites . . . [those, that]
Make their revenue out of legs and faces,
Echo my lord, and lick away a moth." ¹

Thus Theophrastus' " Flatterer " : ²

" With these and like words, he will remove a morsel of wool from his patron's coat ; or, if a speck of chaff has been laid on the other's hair by the wind, he will pick it off. . . . "

In the " Fox " (iv. 3) the lines occur :

" A rat had gnawn my spur-leathers ; notwithstanding,
I put on new, and did go forth ; but first
I threw three beans over the threshold." ³

This is the behaviour of the " Superstitious Man," ⁴
who

" If a mouse gnaws through a meal-bag, he will go to the expounder of sacred law and ask what is to be done ; and if the answer is, ' give it to a cobbler to stitch up,' he will disregard this counsel, and go his way, and expatiate the omen by sacrifice."

Then in " Cynthia's Revels " some of Hedon's ⁵ "graces" remind one of Theophrastus' " Man of Petty Ambition " : ⁶

" He [*i.e.* Hedon] doth (besides me) keep a barber and a monkey ; he has a rich wrought waistcoat to entertain his visitants in, with a cap almost suitable He loves to have a fencer, a pedant, and a musician seen in his lodging a-mornings."

¹ Ibid. p. 361.

⁴ Jebb, p. 163 ff.

² Jebb, p. 81 ff.

⁵ G-C. i. 157.

³ G-C. i. 378.

⁶ Jebb, p. 99 ff.

The "Man of Petty Ambition"

"will have his hair cut very frequently, and will keep his teeth white; he will change his clothes, too, while still good; and will anoint himself with unguent Also he is very much the person to keep a monkey; to get a satyr ape, Sicilian doves, deer-horn dice He will have a little court provided with an arena for wrestling and a ball-alley, and will go about lending it to philosophers, sophists, drill-sergeants, musicians, for their displays; at which he himself will appear upon the scene rather late, in order that the spectators may say to one another, 'This is the owner of the palaestra.'"

The instances above will be sufficient to show that Ben Jonson was acquainted with Theophrastus' Characters.

Traces of the influence of Theophrastus exist even in a more marked degree in Joseph Hall's¹ "Characters of Virtues and Vices" (published 1608) than in the works of Ben Jonson. In point of time Hall was the first writer of a book of "characters," though perhaps this position really belongs to Overbury, for in Hall's work the preacher everywhere obtrudes himself. All his "characters" were written with a moral tendency only, as he himself confesses (in the "Proem" to the "Vices"), with the intent to edify rather than to excite mirth. His "characters" were sermons; whatever humour may be found is of the thinnest kind. It is not to be wondered that Overbury and Earle enjoyed greater popularity than Hall did; though to the author of the "Virgidemiarum" Overbury and "other learned Gentlemen" show indebtedness in certain of their "Characters," as will be afterwards seen.

Hall honestly admits his debt to Theophrastus in his "Premonition of the Title and Use of Characters,"² prefixed

¹ Joseph Hall, born 1574 at Ashby de la Zouch, entered Emmanuel Coll. Cambridge 1589, where he obtained a Fellowship in 1595. In 1601 he became vicar of Halstead (Suffolk), and later Bishop of Exeter, afterwards being translated to Norwich. Deprived of his see during the struggle between the King and Parliament, he ultimately died in poverty at Higham near Norwich in 1658. Hall is best known by his "Toothless Satyrs" and "Byting Satyres" (1597-1598) in six books, which he called the "Virgidemiarum."

² Cf. Morley, C. W. p. 109 ff.

to the "First Book" ("Characterisms of Virtues"). He states :

"It is no shame for us to learn wit of heathens, neither is it material in whose school we take out a good lesson. Yea, it is more shame not to follow their good than not to lead them better. As one, therefore, that in worthy examples hold imitation better than invention, I have trod in their paths,¹ but with an higher and wider step, and out of their tablets have drawn these larger portraitures of both sorts."²

Hall introduces his "Characterisms," both of the Virtues and of the Vices, by a Proem to each. For these he found a model in Theophrastus, although the proem in the Greek work is now considered spurious³ by most authorities. In his Proem⁴ to the Virtues Hall makes a pointed reference to Theophrastus :

"This work shall save the labour of exhorting and dissuasion. I have here done it as I could, following that ancient master of morality, who thought this the fittest task for the ninety and ninth year of his age,⁵ and the profitabest monument that he could leave for a farewell visit to his Grecians."

Hall imitates Theophrastus too in the short summaries frequently found at the end of several "characters." In this he is followed often by Overbury and Earle. These clauses at the end of the Characters of Theophrastus are now regarded as interpolations of a later hand.

Furthermore the titles of various "characters" in Hall's book remind one of those of Theophrastus.⁶ Hall writes "Of the Faithful Man," "Of an Honest Man," "Of the Slothful," and not "The Faithful Man," etc., as later writers

¹ "their paths," *i.e.* of Theophrastus in his "Characters" and Aristotle in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (?).

² Theophrastus had no "characters" of virtuous men.

³ Cf. Jebb, *Introduction* I.

⁴ Cf. Morley, *C. W.* p. 111.

⁵ Cf. Jebb, *Proem* : "For a long time, Polycles, I have been a student of human nature ; I have lived ninety years and nine ; I have associated, too, with many and diverse natures ; and, having observed side by side, with great closeness, both the good and the worthless among men, I conceived that I ought to write a book about the practices in life of either sort."

⁶ The genitive in the Greek is thus rendered by Healey : "X., Of base Avarice or Parsimony," etc. Cf. *Mic. T. C.* p. 128.

would have done. It is chiefly in Hall's "Characterisms of Vices" that most analogies to the Characters of Theophrastus are found. Several have been already pointed out by Jebb, and will be omitted here. Thus Hall's "Superstitious Man"¹ is a paraphrase of the same person in the Greek work. A passage will suffice:

"This man dares not stir forth till his breast be crossed and his face sprinkled: if but an hare cross him the way, he returns; or if his journey began unawares on the dismal day, or if he stumble at the threshold. If he see a snake unkilld, he fears a mischief; if the salt fall towards him, he looks pale and red, and is not quiet till one of the waiters have poured wine on his lap. . . ."

According to Theophrastus, the "Superstitious Man"² is

"one who will wash his hands at a fountain, sprinkle himself from a temple-font, put a bit of laurel leaf into his mouth, and so go about for the day. If a weasel run across his path, he will not pursue his walk until someone else has traversed the road, or until he has thrown three stones across it. When he sees a serpent in his house, if it be the red snake, he will invoke Sabazius,—if the sacred snake, he will straightway place a shrine on the spot. . . ."

Both Hall's "Busybody" and "Flatterer" show borrowings from Theophrastus' "Newsmonger" and "Flatterer," as Jebb has already pointed out. But the "Slothful" is often similar in his actions to the "Offensive Man," because their acts arise from the same motive, sloth. The "Slothful"

"is a standing pool, and cannot choose but gather corruption. He is descried amongst a thousand neighbours by a dry and nasty hand, that still savours of the sheet, a beard uncut, unkempt, an eye and ear yellow with their excretions, a coat shaken on, ragged, unbrushed, by linen and face striving whether shall excell in uncleanness. For body, he hath a swollen leg, a dusky and swinish eye, a blown cheek, a drawling tongue, an heavy foot, and is nothing but a colder earth moulded with standing water."³

In Theophrastus we find :

¹ Morley, C. W. p. 134.

² Cf. Jebb, p. 163 ff.

³ Morley, C. W. pp. 141, 142.

"Offensiveness¹ is distressing neglect of the person. The Offensive man is one who will go about with a scrofulous or leprous affection, or with the nails overgrown, and say that these are hereditary complaints with him; his father had them, and his grandfather, and it is not easy to be smuggled into *his* family. . . . He will use rancid oil to anoint himself at the bath; and will go forth into the Marketplace wearing a thick tunic, and a very light cloak, covered with stains."

Hall's "Covetous" (man) shows a parallel with the "Penurious Man" of Theophrastus. It is as follows:

"Once in a year, perhaps, he gives himself leave to feast . . . and when his guests are parted, talks how much every man devoured, and how many cups were emptied. . . ." ²

The "Penurious Man" ³

"when he is at table with others he will count how many cups each of them has drunk; and will pour a smaller libation to Artemis than any of the company."

Furthermore in the "Characterism" of the "Distrustful" passages occur which find a counterpart in Theophrastus' "Distrustful Man." Thus according to Hall: ⁴

"When he hath committed a message to his servant, he sends a second after him to listen how it is delivered."

Theophrastus states:

"The Distrustful man⁵ is one who, having sent his slave to market, will send another to ascertain what price he gave."

Again (Hall):

"After his first sleep he starts up and asks if the furthest gate were barred, and out of a fearful sweat calls up his servant and bolts the door after him, and then studies whether it were better to lie still and believe, or rise and see."

According to Theophrastus the Distrustful Man will

"ask his wife in bed if she has locked the wardrobe, and if the cupboard has been sealed, and the bolt put upon the hall-door;

¹ Jebb, p. 114.

² Cf. Morley, C. W. p. 142.

³ Cf. Jebb, p. 147 ff.

⁴ Morley's C. W. Both passages on page 147.

⁵ Cf. Jebb, pp. 145, 146.

and if the reply is ' Yes,' not the less will he forsake the blankets and run about shoeless to inspect all these matters, and barely thus find sleep."

Though Overbury, by infusing wit and humour into his " Characters," wrote more in accordance with Greek models than Hall, he betrays far less dependence on Theophrastus, although he may have read him.¹ Probably Overbury was more a man of the world than a scholar, and wrote his " Characters " from direct observation of amusing types of humanity whom he met in daily intercourse. These were chiefly courtiers and their satellites. Overbury was furthermore a friend of Jonson ; had acted a part in one of his pastorals (?),² and was no doubt a warm admirer of Ben's plays. Thus he was influenced more by the realistic drama than by Theophrastus, who perhaps only reached him through the medium of Ben Jonson and Hall.

However a few, but very superficial, resemblances to passages in Theophrastus may be traced in the " Characters " written by Overbury himself. Probably they are merely accidental, and should at any rate be accepted with the greatest caution. One occurs in the " Tymist " :

" He pleaseth the children of great men, and promiseth to adopt them ; and his curtesie extends its selfe euen to the stable."

In Theophrastus' " Complaisant Man " ³ we hear that

" when he is asked to dinner he will request his host to send for the children ; and will say of them, when they come in, that they are like their father as figs ; and will draw them towards him, and kiss them, and establish them at his side,—playing with some of them, and himself saying ' Wineskin,' ' Hatchet,' and permitting others to go to sleep upon him, to his anguish."

There is some similarity in the definition of Overbury's " Dissembler " to that of the " Complaisant Man." Besides in the " ignorant glory-hunter " it is said that :

¹ Anthony Wood in the A. O. i. 388 relates that Overbury was successful at Oxford.

² Cf. p. 14.

³ Cf. Jebb, p. 85 ff.

"He [*i.e.* the glory-hunter] gets the names of good wits, and utters them for his companions. . . . In any shew he will be one . . . and beares down strangers with the storie of his actions. . . . He relates battels and skirmishes, as from an eye witnes, when his eyes thieushly beguiled a ballad of them."

In the "Boastful Man" ¹ the following occurs :

"He [*i.e.* the Boastful Man] loves, also, to impose upon his companion by the road with a story of how he served with Alexander, and on what terms he was with him, and what a number of gemmed cups he brought home ; contending too, that the Asiatic artists are superior to those of Europe ; and all this when he has never been out of Attica. Then he will say that a letter has come from Antipater—'this is the third.' . . ."

As Jebb has shown, there are two curious but inconclusive resemblances to Theophrastus' Characters, one in the "Covetous man," and the other in "The Proud Man." Neither of them could have been written by Overbury himself, since they are the two opening "characters" of the ninth impression (1616).² Their author (or authors) may have been indebted to Healey, whose translation appeared in the same year.

The first passage is as follows :

"if he [*i.e.* the Covetous man] euer pray, it is some one may breake his day, that the beloued forfeiture may be obtained."

According to Healey's translation, the parallel passage in Theophrastus is :

"If any debtor miss his day but a minute, hee is sure to pay soundly for forbearance ; besides usury upon usury, if he continue it."³

The second instance referred to occurs in "The Proud Man,"

"he neuer salutes first . . ."

equivalent to

"As he [*i.e.* the proud man] walks bending down his head, speaks to no man that he meets."⁴

¹ Cf. Jebb, p. 95 ff.

² Cf. p. 42, note 1.

³ Cf. Earle's Micro. (T.C.). Healey's Transl. of Theophrastus: X. Of base Avarice or Parsimony, p. 128.

⁴ Ibid. XXIV. Of Pride, p. 144.

From these quotations it will be seen, that the direct influence of Theophrastus on the "Overbury" group of "character-writers" was very slight, even if indeed it may be said to have existed at all. It was much greater on Earle, whose "Micro-cosmographie," appearing for the first time in 1628, will be examined later on in connection with Overbury's influence on English letters.

If Casaubon's Latin translation of Theophrastus popularized this author in England, and paved the way for English books of "characters," the second motive power that produced the rapid and immense output in this field of letters is to be found in the political, social and literary conditions prevalent in England during the second decade of the seventeenth century. In the drama especially a marked change was taking place. Though creative power was still abundant, it was deteriorating in quality and rapidly passing from idealism to realism, the latter often of the crassest. The "Tempest" marks the end of the first period. Due to exterior circumstances an analytical bent was replacing the creative faculty in the English mind. The stirring and imaginative days of Elizabeth had gone past recall, and with them much of the national enthusiasm had vanished. Its place was taken by fervid religious movements which James desired to regulate by imposing on them theology of his own special kind. The gloom cast over the land by the foolish king's misgovernment was gradually being intensified by the dark cloud of Puritanism slowly spreading over the whole country, and more especially over the once joyous town of London. "Merry England" was soon to be no more; and all the happy customs were felt to be doomed, as we see in Ben Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair."¹

Waspe (to *Busy*, the "Banbury man," who is in the stocks):
 "What are you, sir?"

Busy: "One that rejoiceth in his affliction, and sitteth here to prophesy the destruction of fairs and May-games, wakes and

¹ Act iv. Sc. 4. G-C. ii. 194.

Whitsun-ales, and doth sigh and groan for the reformation of these abuses."

Led by the Puritans, and shocked by the grossness which marred many plays, the majority of the citizens were beginning to look on the theatre as an abomination. Their descendants did not quite get over this habit, and its consequences are but too well felt to-day in English drama.

Though the Cavaliers stoutly held out for another generation, it gradually grew impossible for writers to resist the tendency of their age. When the plays found less favour, the "characters" became more popular. They suited the habit of introspection, of analysis of motives, then rapidly becoming a second nature with Englishmen owing to the thralldom theology established over their minds.

No "characters" were received with greater enthusiasm than those written by Overbury and "other learned Gentlemen." As we have seen, they were the third collection to appear, but may be considered the first, because Ben Jonson's "characters" were incidental. Though these were more excellent than Overbury's (just as Ben's genius was also greater than his friend's), they were overlooked, being embedded in his comedies. Hall's "Characterisms" were too serious in tone to appeal to a wide public. They were sermons rather than "characters."

How then did Overbury achieve his popularity? Is this due to his "Characters" only? The first reason is supplied by Overbury's tragic end, and the indignation of the people at their pedant-king and his vile court. But this was not the only cause. Overbury's Characters were humorous¹ and witty, and contained veiled references to well-known men and women. They were also not mere abstract ideas, but showed ridiculous types of humanity, products of the time.

Overbury may have written some twenty "characters"

¹ At the present moment they seem rather crabbed in style, though quaint. It is not easy to grasp the humour owing to the difficulties presented by the language, and the many obsolete institutions referred to.

in all, certainly not more.¹ But his book containing his "incomparable" poem "The Wife"—to us rather a formal and stiff creation—passed through edition after edition. Was the "Wife" the attraction? Scarcely; but the addition of "New Characters (drawne to the life) of severall persons in severall qualities" must have been, for imitators of Overbury sprang up by the score. They all wrote "Characters"; but few attempted to emulate the "Wife."² At present early editions of Overbury are somewhat scarce. In fact the second and the fourth seem to exist in unique copies only. This does not appear to indicate great popularity, and makes it doubtful if many copies were issued in each new impression. But Overbury's works were printed in books of the minute size then very much in vogue, and doubtless the great possibility of losing such small volumes explains their present scarcity.

Even in the Characters of Theophrastus a great deal of "overlapping" is visible. In other words the major trait of one character appears in a modified form in another. This is perfectly natural. The character of no single individual is marked by one trait only, but consists of several. However among the psychical forces composing a character one is stronger than any of the others. The resultant will differ from that of some similar character, in which some other force is more powerful. Thus in

¹ No writings of Overbury passed the press during his lifetime. Lisle in his preface "To the Reader" states: "The surplusage, that now exceeds the last edition [*i.e.* the "Characters" and "Newes"], was (that I may be honestly impartial) in some things only to be challenged by the first author." As some of the "Newes" were initialled, but none of the "Characters" were, perhaps only a few of the latter came from Overbury's pen. Of course no "character" appearing in any impression later than the second may claim Overbury as its author.

² The "Wife," it is true, did find imitators. W. Ford in his MS. Notes in the copy of the 15th impression of Overbury's Works preserved in the British Museum remarks: "Overbury's Wife gave rise to many imitations. I have observed the following: A choice Husband for Sir T. Overbury's Wife by Jo. Davies 1616. The Husband, a poem expressed in a compleat Man 1614. A Happy Husband and Directions for a Maid to chose her Mate, By P. Hamay 1619. A Dialogue of Women's Properties, by Arth. Newman 1619. A Poem of a Mayde, with some Characters, by W. Saltonstall, 1631."

Bliss mentions these imitators, cf. Mic (B-I), p. 229 and Footnote; p. 256 and Footnote.

Theophrastus, the "Flatterer"¹ and "Complaisant Man"² act much alike when guests; for instance the Flatterer

"will buy apples and pears, and bring them in and give to the children in the father's presence; adding, with kisses, 'Chicks of a good father.'"

And the Complaisant Man, we are told

"when he is asked to dinner," etc. Cf. ante p. 38.

In spite of the similarity of their behaviour, the characters of the Flatterer and of the Complaisant Man are not identical. The former wishes to ingratiate himself with the father, having ulterior motives. He desires to exploit him for his own ends. The Complaisant Man has no desire to live parasitically on his host, although he fawns on him. His only wish is to be considered amiable, to get the reputation of a "good fellow."

If, as we have seen, overlapping occurs in the classical models, how much more often shall we find it in a book of "characters" written by several hands and at different times! In some cases whole series of almost identical characters appear, which, if generalized, could be reduced to single characters only, or may be considered to have been written to represent the same person at different periods of life. Thus the fops form a group. The youngest is the inexperienced and shallow "golden Ass" (*jeunesse dorée*), who having perhaps passed through the larval stage of the "ignorant glory-hunter" develops into the "Gallant." Thence is but a small step to become the "fine Gentleman," and (if his money or credit lasts) to blossom forth into the "Courtier" "to all men's thinking . . . a man, and to most men the finest [man]."

Another instance of a chain of "characters" is that, in which the "meere Scholer," the "meere Fellow(s) of a(n) House"³ occur, or branch off into the "Inns of Court man" and thence into the "meere Common Lawyer."⁴

¹ Cf. Jebb, p. 81 ff.

² Ibid. p. 85 ff.

³ "A Fellow of an House" = of a college; a "don."

⁴ "Meere Common Lawyer," *i.e.* of Common Law.

This is not due to a deliberate act of the authors. Overbury, who wrote some, if not all the "Characters" included in the second impression of the "Wife" (1614), scarcely attempted to arrange them in a logical sequence.¹ A glance at the Index of the "Characters" suffices to demonstrate this. In following editions the "characters" already published were reissued in their former order,² the newly written ones being added without any effort at arrangement. Amongst the new-comers former acquaintances, treated from a slightly different point of view, may in some cases be recognized. In the "sixt" impression we find a "meere Fellow of an House," and in the freshly added "Characters" in the appendix to the same edition another "fellow of a House." But here probably the second essay was inserted by the publisher either to please the author, or in order to prevent it being accepted by a rival editor of similar compilations.³

The lack of arrangement of the "characters," and their frequent overlapping tend often to produce confusion in the mind even of a careful reader of Overbury's "Characters." After all, there are eighty of them, many of which are so similar to each other as to be almost identical in content. It will therefore be expedient to arrange the "Characters" into groups. When this has been done they may easily be compared, and the sources (if any) from which they are derived be sought.

Taking the Characters of Theophrastus as the

¹ The Characters of Theophrastus were not arranged according to the similarity of men depicted. In fact this gave rise to much confusion, as parts of certain "characters" were later on inserted in others to which they did not belong; and it was impossible to correct the text before the discovery of the Vatican MS. (1786), and the researches of H. E. Foss (Jena, 1834-36). Cf. Jebb, Introduction to the "Characters of Theophrastus," Macmillan, 1870.

² There are however two exceptions. Sir H(enry) W(otton's) "Character of a happy life" appears directly after the "meere Common Lawyer" in the "fift" impression. In editions vii., ix., x., it is relegated to the end. The "Purueiour of Tobacco" appears only in the appendix to the "sixt" impression, and is placed between the "Franklin" and the "Rimer."

³ Cf. pp. 59-61; also p. 111.

original models imitated by the English "characterists," I propose to select as the first group those particular sketches nearest in design and execution to the pictures of the Greek philosopher. In the second the "characters" of women, neglected by Theophrastus, will be treated, and in the third those "characters" which mark an innovation, being "types" of men fitted by certain qualities to exercise particular professions and callings—such as the "Ostler," "Soldier," "Tinker," etc.—rather than delineations of character.¹

But before examining the "Characters" and their sources, it must not be forgotten, however much the "Overbury" group of anonymous writers may have been influenced by Theophrastus, by Nashe, Hall, Dekker, or the comedians of the early seventeenth century, a large proportion of their work is quite original. In most cases their borrowings are catch-words at most, such as must have been in everybody's mouth at that time. Many "characters" have been drawn directly from personal observation, and are descriptions of whimsical personages (the "Roaring Boys," fantastics, etc.), who would naturally be fit objects for ridicule.

Sometimes the "character" is found to be an immune form of lampoon.² Overbury's "old Man" for instance

¹ The arrangement in this book is but a makeshift, adopted merely to secure some order and simplicity. No doubt another system of grouping could be suggested.

² Cf. the covert attack on Lady Frances Howard in the "Very very Woman," and "Her next part." (Cf. pp. 95-97.)

Also the closing lines of the "*Intruder into favour*" seem to contain some personal allusion: "Hee is *Mountaines Monkie*, that climbing a tree, and skipping from bough to bough, giues you backe his face; but comne once to the top, hee holdes his nose vp into the winde, and shewes you his taile: yet all this gay glitter shewes on him, as if the Sunne shone in a puddle; for he is a small wine, that will not last: and when hee is falling, hee goes of himselfe faster than misery can driue him." (1615.) Here surely Carr is referred to. James I. was notorious for his bad choice of favourites. The fall of Somerset (Carr) which took place at this time was terribly sudden. From the all-powerful favourite he became a doomed felon, receiving as last gift of his patron his worthless life to be dragged on in seclusion with his now detested wife. This reference seems to be all the more certain from another passage in the same "character," viz.: "He followes the mans fortune, not the man: seeking thereby to increase his owne. He pretends,

cannot be taken as a generalization of a class, whose years and experience have ever claimed reverence from mankind, but rather an embittered attack on some unknown individual to whom he cherished a deep-rooted antipathy.

hee is most vndereruedly enuied, and cries out, remembring the game, *Chesse*, that a Pawne before a King is most plaid on." This King is of course James, whom Somerset, jealous of Buckingham, the rising star at court, bullied. Even to Overbury Carr had expressed his contempt for James—"a necessary evil." He pestered James with complaints about the behaviour of his enemies. James' expostulatory letter is preserved. (Cf. Halliwell; Letters of the Kings of England, ii. 126, and Gardiner; History of England, ii. 319.)

The passage: "Hee is *Mountaines Monkie* . . . shewes you his taile" would seem to have been borrowed from Florio's Montaigne, ii. 17 (ed. Morley, Routledge, p. 331), where we read that: "Lord Oliver . . . said that Frenchmen might be compared to apes, who, climbing up a tree, never cease skipping from bough to bough, till they come to the highest, where they shew their bare tailes." In the words *Mountaines Monkie* a pun on *Montaigne* may be intended; however it must not be forgotten that the large apes were first seen on Coniquet or "Pongo, which hath a monstrous high hill." Cf. Huxley, *Man's Place in Nature*, Everyman Series, pp. 3-7.

CHAPTER III

"CHARACTERS" SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THEOPHRASTUS

As the group of "characters" showing greatest affinity to those written by Theophrastus is a large one, it will be advisable to further subdivide it.

Covering the same ground as Theophrastus' "Flatterer" and "Complaisant Man" we find among Overbury's Characters the "Dissembler" (ii. 1614),¹ the "Tymist" (ii. 1614), the "Flatterer" (ii. 1614), and the "Intruder into fauour" (vi.b 1615).

As the first two of these are described in such general terms it is not easy to point to any character in a contemporary play, and state that the original of the sketch is to be found there. A similarity in the "Tymist" to Theophrastus' "Complaisant Man" has already been pointed out.² But matters are slightly different in the case of the "Flatterer." To him certain traits have been superadded; he is not only a toady,³ but a "shark" and a procurer. He has therefore much in common with Bobadill ("Every Man in his Humour"), but lacks this worthy's fine vein of vain-glorious cowardice. Shift, Bobadill's

¹ The Roman figures in the brackets refer to the (B.M.) edition in which the "character" first appeared; the other numeral to the date of the impression. These were as follows:

Impression ii. in 1614.

„ v. in 1614.

„ vi. in 1614.

„ { vi.a refers to the first addition of Characters in this impression.

„ { vi.b „ „ second „ „ „ „

„ ix. in 1616.

No additions occurred in editions iii. or vii., whilst iv. and viii. were inaccessible to me.

² Cf. p. 38.

³ So is Hall's "Flatterer" too, in which however a passage occurs similar to one in Overbury's "Flatterer."

successor in "Every Man out of his Humour," is more nearly his prototype. Though this "thread-bare shark" haunts St. Paul's, and the "Flatterer" the Court of Wards and also ordinaries (*i.e.* taverns), they both do so with the view of leading "Golden Asses" astray. Their methods are the same, and, if the word "countenance" ¹ is used as a pun in the following passage, it might indicate a catch-word borrowed from Ben Jonson's play. We read that the "Flatterer"

"will play any part vpon his countenance, and where hee cannot be a counsellor, hee will serue as fool."²

Thus, when Sogliardo, one of the tribe of "Golden Asses," meets Shift, he asks him :

"You will not serve me, sir, will you ? I'll give you more than countenance."

Later on in the play (Act iv. Sc. 4), we see them in the bloom of their intimacy :

Shift. Pardon me, my dear Orestes. . . .

Carlo Buffone. How ! Pylades and Orestes ?

Sogliardo. Ay, he is my Pylades.

This designation is considered hackneyed ; new names are suggested. Thus Puntarvolo says :

"Faith let me end it for you, gallants : you shall be his Countenance (to Sogliardo), and he your Resolution."³

The "Intruder into fauour," appearing in a later edition, is a continuation of the "Flatterer," and represents the successful parasite. The sources of this "character" are

¹ "Countenance" was frequently used by Ben Jonson in the sense of "patronage." Also in "As You Like It" (i. 1) Orlando says : "Besides this nothing that he (*i.e.* Oliver) so plentifully gives me, the something that nature gave me, his countenance seems to take from me." Applied as a name, "countenance" would be equivalent to "patron."

² Another allusion to "countenance" occurs in the "character" of the "golden Asse," cf. p. 83, and note 1. Thus in the passage quoted "countenance" seems to have been purposely inserted. "Face" would otherwise have done equal service.

³ Subsequently in the play Shift and Sogliardo continually designate each other by "Countenance" and "Resolution."

not far to seek. James I. produced notorious specimens of the "Intruder into fauour" in the persons of Carr and Buckingham, and, as this essay was written at a period when Overbury's murder was exciting men's minds against Somerset as the instigator, if not the actual perpetrator of the crime, it would hardly be surprising, if the hasty downfall of the insolent "Intruder" were written to predict the imminent ruin of the King's favourite. But till Somerset had been convicted of the murder and disgraced, it would only be safe to attack him in carefully veiled language.¹

A small sub-group is formed by the "characters" of the "Melancholy Man" (v. 1614) and of the "Distaster of the Time" (vi.b 1615). They bear some affinity to the "Surly Man" of Theophrastus, but are not dependent on this author. Two parallels may be found between the "Melancholy Man" and the "Distaster of the Time." They are:

MELANCHOLY MAN.

"Speake to him; he heares with his eyes, eares follow his mind, and that's not at leysure."

"He thinks busines, but neuer does any, hee is all contemplation, no action."

DISTASTER OF THE TIME.

"When he is awake, and goes abroad, hee doth but walke in his sleepe, for his visitation is directed to none."

"his businesse is nothing."

These dreadfully splenitic individuals are very nearly identical in character; however all traits are intensified in the "Distaster." Perhaps they were suggested by Macilente ("Every Man out of his Humour"), who is

"A man well parted, a sufficient scholar, and travelled; who, wanting that place in the world's account which he thinks his merit capable of, falls into such an envious apoplexy, with which his judgement is so dazzled and distasted, that he grows violently impatient of any opposite happiness in another."²

¹ Cf. p. 45, note 2.

² Cf. G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 62. "The Character of the Persons," Every Man out of his Humour. Macilente's envy often finds expression, thus (Every Man out of his Humour, i. 1, p. 78; ii. 2, p. 90 and 93; iv. 4, p. 117.

The same is stated in the "Distaster of the Time" thus :

"His malice suckes vp the greatest part of his owne venome, and therewith impoisoneth himselfe¹: and this sicknesse rises rather of *selfe-opinion*, or *ouer-great expectation*. . . . Any mans aduancement is the most capitall offence that can be to his malice: yet this enuy . . . makes that a torment, first for himselfe, [that] he prepared for others."

In the next sub-group the "characters" are described in very general terms, but are applied to persons in certain positions of life. Not only in this respect do they vary from the Theophrastian "characters" but they usually portray virtuous men, two "characters" only having vicious counterparts.

The "Wise-man" (ii. 1614), the "noble Spirit" (ii. 1614), the "Noble and retir'd House-Keeper" (vi.b 1615),² the "worthy Commander in the Warres" and (the reverse: "A vaine-glorious Coward in Command"), the "Reuerend Iudge," the "excellent Actor" (with which the "Rimer" must be considered), and the "Franklin" might almost have been called the "Wise Man," "Noble Man," "Prudent Man," "Just Man," etc. They often form the reverse of "characters" met with in Theophrastus, thus of the "Stupid Man," the "Coward," the "Patron of Rascals," but do not betray any further dependence on the Greek writer.

The first three "characters" now under treatment possess following qualities in common :

- (1) Capacity for friendship, and hatred of ostentation.
- (2) Prudence; "a hand ouer Fortune."
- (3) Independence of time or surroundings. Age brings them strength of soul to compensate for bodily weakness.

¹ Cf. Florio's Montaigne, iii, 2 (ed. Morley, p. 410): "Malice sucks up the greatest part of her owne venome, and therewith impoisoneth herself."

² This "character" and the following all appeared in the second addition of "new characters" in the "sixt" impression, 1615. Though belonging really to the last group of characters, viz., to those delineating persons peculiarly fitted for certain professions, it is convenient to treat the Judge, Actor, Rimer, and Franklin here.

That superiority in overcoming or nobly enduring the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" forms the Leitmotiv of all three characters; they almost seem to have been summed up by Ben Jonson in his "Timber."¹ But this is due to the similarity of the subject treated. We read :

"Fortuna.—Ill Fortune never crushed that man, whom good Fortune deceived not. I therefore have counselled my friends, never to trust to her fairer side, though she seemed to make peace with them : but to place all things she gave them so, as she might ask them again without their trouble ; she might take them from them, not pull them ; to keep always a distance between her and themselves. He knows not his own strength, that hath not met adversity. Heaven prepares good men with crosses ; but no ill can happen to a good man. Contraries are not mixed. Yet, that which happens to any man, may to every man. But it is in his reason what he accounts it, and will make it."

Besides the main trait the "Wise-man" and "noble Spirit" have certain features in common with some of the "Characters of Virtues and Vices" by Hall. Thus in his "Wise Man" two passages may be found which are similar to two in Overbury's "character" of the same name. They are as follows :

(1). *Hall*²—"He is seldom ever seen with credulity ; for, knowing the falseness of the world, he hath learned to trust himself always, others so far as he may not be damaged by their disappointment" [=by their disappointing him].

Overbury—"He is cunning in men, not to surprise but keepe his owne, and beats off their ill affected humours, no otherwise then if they were flies."

(2). *Hall*—"His passions are so many good servants, which stand in a diligent attendance ready to be commanded by reason, by religion ; and if at any time forgetting their duty, they be mis-carried to rebel, he can first conceal their mutiny, then suppress it."

Overbury—"His mind enjoyes a continuall smoothnesse, so cometh it, that his consideration is alwaies at home . . . he hath

¹ G-C. iii. 390. The articles in the *Timber* are nearly all, if not all, borrowings or translations from the classics. Cf. Percy Simpson: *Tamquam Explorator: Jonson's Method in the "Discoveries."* *Mod. Lang. Review*, ii. 201 ff.

² Cf. Morley, C.W. pp. 112, 113.

diuided his soule, from the case of his soule. . . . Hee is thus, and will be thus : and liues subiect neither to time nor his frailties."

Again these parallels were produced perhaps by the similarity of the subject treated, and could not have been avoided.¹ In a like manner in Overbury's "Wise-man" we meet Hall's "True Friend." Thus the "Wise-man"

"endures the faults of all men silently, except his friends, and to them hee is the mirrour of their actions ; by this meanes his peace commeth not from fortune, but himselfe. He is cunning in men, not to surprise but keepe his owne, and beats off their ill affected humours, no otherwise then if they were flies. Hee chooseth not his friends by the subsidie booke, and is not luxurious after acquaintance."

Hall's "True Friend's 'choice'" (of a friend)

is led by virtue, or the best of virtues, religion ; not by gain. . . . His charity serves to cloak noted infirmities, not by untruth, not by flattery, but by discreet secrecy ; neither is he more favourable in concealment than round in his private reprehensions ; and when another's simple fidelity shows itself in his reproof, he loves his monitor so much the more, by how much more he smarteth."²

If these passages do not yield absolute proofs of indebtedness on Overbury's part to Hall, the similarity in the following sentences is striking. They and the fore-going would lead one to believe that the author of the "Wise-man" and "noble Spirit" was acquainted with the older book of "characters." We read that Hall's "Valiant Man"³

"commands without tyranny and imperiousness, obeys without servility, and changes not his mind with his estate."

Overbury's "noble Spirit"

"gouerneth and obeyeth with one countenance ; for it comes from one consideration."

The "worthy Commander in the Warres" and his opposite

¹ It is very difficult in all "characters" treated in an ideal spirit or in general terms to state what is borrowed and what is original. Many ideas of what is good or bad belong to no special age or country, but to mankind in general. They are "Gemeingut."

² Morley, C.W. p. 120.

³ Ibid. p. 118.

the "vaine-glorious Coward in Command," whose analogy in Theophrastus is the "Coward," do not seem to owe their existence to any Elizabethan play. But surely the figure of an ideally skilful and chivalrous general would easily be conjured up in the mind of any one of Raleigh's contemporaries; many of the men of this period had, like Jonson, trailed a pike in the Netherlands.

Hall's "character" of the "Valiant Man"¹ presents many similarities to the "worthy Commander," but is written in a more general tone. That the "character" of a "brave man" should be so restricted, as to apply to a "Commander" only, seems to imply that the later writer was acquainted with the "Valiant Man," and felt that, if he were to write the "Character of a Brave Man," he would be forced to repeat the same matter in other words.²

In like manner it is almost impossible to trace the prototype of the "vaine-glorious Coward in Command." Certain features of those stage favourites Falstaff and his successor Bessus (in Beaumont and Fletcher's "A King and No King") may be suspected, but no passage can be indicated where a direct act of borrowing becomes evident. Of the "vaine-glorious Coward in Command" we read that he

"Is one that hath bought his place, or come to it by some Noble-mans Letter, he loues a life dead payes, yet wishes they may rather happen in his company by the scury, then by a battel."

Another reference to "dead pays" occurs in Day's "Parliament of Bees,"³ where in "Character IV" Armiger the honest soldier remarks:

¹ Ibid. pp. 117-118.

² Many similar passages do occur in either "character" and must be ascribed to the resemblance the "worthy Commander" of need bears to the "Valiant Man."

³ Cf. M. Nero, p. 232. Of this play the editor states "The only extant edition of *The Parliament of Bees* is the quarto of 1641. Mention is made, however, of a quarto of 1607 in Gildon's edition of Langbaine's *Dramatick Poets*, 1699, in Giles Jacob's *Poetical Register*, 1719, in the *Companion to the Playhouse*, 1764, and by Charles Lamb in the *Extracts from the Garrick Plays*. No search has been able to reveal the existence of any copy of this early

“ and I all this while
 Drilled under honesty, never pursed dead pay,
 . . . A soldier dead, his pay did likewise die. . . .”¹

The “character” of the “Reuerend Iudge” is one of the most beautiful in the whole collection issued under Overbury’s name.² In this piece there are ideas borrowed from the “Utopia,” and Sir Thomas More, who was some centuries in advance of the “justice” of the time, is probably the “Reuerend Iudge” himself. The dependence on “Utopia” is seen in the following passage :

“ He wishes fewer Lawes, so they were better obseru’d : and for those are Mulctuary, he vnderstands their institution not to bee like briars or springes, to catch euery thing they lay hold of ; but like Sea-markes (on our dangerous *Goodwin*) to auoid the shipwracke of ignorant passengers. He hates to wrong any man ; neither hope, nor despaire of preferment can draw him to such an exigent : he thinks himself then most honourably seated, when he giues mercy the vpper hand. Hee rather striues to purchase good name then land ; and of all rich stufes forbidden by the Statute, loaths to haue his Followers weare their cloathes cut out of bribes and extortions.”

In More’s book we read :

“ But in Utopia every man is a cunning lawyer. For (as I said) they have very few laws ; and the plainer and grosser that any interpretation is, that they allow as most just. For all laws (say they) be made and published only to the intent that by them every

edition, and it seems probable that no such edition ever existed.” Ibid. p. 210. The fact, that in deference to the popularity of “Characters,” the play is not divided into scenes but “Characters,” seems to point to a date later than 1614. In Engl. Dramat. Literature, ii. (Macmillan, 1899), A. W. Ward states : “Strangely enough there are comprised in it large borrowings from Dekker’s play of *The Wonder of a Kingdom* (licensed 1623) as well as from Samuel Rowley’s *The Noble Soldier* (printed 1636) and we are reduced to the possible explanation that Day had formerly contributed to these two plays, and now reclaimed his contributions” (pp. 593, 4 ; cf. also pp. 549, 550). Therefore the Parliament of Bees in its present form cannot have been written as early as 1607 ; some date between 1631 (when the *Noble Spanish Soldier* was registered as by Dekker) and 1641 would be more likely.

¹ These passages are quoted to explain a textual difficulty and not to show indebtedness on the part of the “Overbury” writers to Day’s play. In fact Day’s allusion to “dead pays” may have been suggested by the “character” of the “Coward in Command.”

² From its very idealistic tone it strikes one forcibly as being a contribution from the pen of the unknown author of the “Milke-mayd” and “Franklin.” All three characters appeared in vi.b, 1615.

man should be put in remembrance of his duty. But the crafty and subtle interpretation of them (forasmuch as few can attain thereto) can put very few in that remembrance, whereas the simple, the plain and gross meaning of the laws is open to every man.”¹

The “Mulctuary Lawes” referred to as “briers or springes” to the unwary are also referred to by More :

“Suppose that some king and his council were together whetting their wits, and devising what subtle craft they might invent to enrich the king with great treasures of money. . . . Another putteth the king in remembrance of certain old and moth-eaten laws, that of long time have not been put in execution, which because no man can remember that they were made, every man hath transgressed. The fines of these laws he counselleth the king to require : for there is no way so profitable nor more honourable, as the which hath a show and colour of justice.”²

The “Reuerend Iudge’s” hatred of bribery was one of More’s most marked traits, and contrasts wonderfully with the behaviour of Bacon, then the most noted lawyer living. More, at the age of fifty-one was

“created Lord Chancellor of England. This post he held for less than three years, resigning it rather than consent to the divorce of Queen Catherine. He left this high post a poor man, a rare thing in those days, when the taking of bribes was common. Though his income was now but £100 a year, he magnanimously refused the gift of £5,000 offered him by Convocation for his defence of the Church against heresy.”³

More lived up to his ideals of a judge ; and what these were can be seen in “Utopia,” ii., where the lands bordering on Utopia appoint Utopians as judges :⁴

“For seeing that both the making and marring of the weal public doth depend and hang upon the manners of the rulers and magistrates, what officers could they more wisely have chosen, than those which cannot be led from honesty by bribes (for to them that shortly after shall depart thence into their own country money should be

¹ Cf. Sir Thomas More, ed. by M. Adams, W. Scott, Lond. H.C. “Utopia,” ii. p. 163. More delineates a state of things yet unattained ; do two lawyers ever give the same interpretation of a new statute ?

² Cf. Adams. Sir Th. More, “Utopia,” i. p. 105.

³ Ibid. Introduction by M. Adams, p. xxvii., and Roper’s “Life of More,” pp. 33, 28, 29, 30.

⁴ Ibid. p. 164.

unprofitable) nor yet be moved either with favour, or malice towards any man, as being strangers, and unacquainted with the people ? ”

The passage from the “ Reuerend Iudge ” quoted above contains the line :

“ he thinks himself then most honourably seated, when he giues mercy the vpper hand.”

This reminds one at once of Portia’s speech, which perhaps was in the writer’s mind.

The “ character ” closes thus :

“ If his Prince call him to a higher place, there he deliuers his mind plainly, and freely ; knowing for truth, there is no place wherein dissembling ought to haue lesse credit, then in a Princes Council. Thus honour keepes peace with him to the graue, and doth not (as with many) there forsake him, and goe back with the Heralds : but fairely sits ore him, and broods out of his memory, many right excellent Common-wealths-men.”

This certainly applies to Sir Thomas More, who was ever outspoken and truthful, and whose conscientiousness cost him his life. However “ honour kept peace with him ” to his death on the scaffold. Possibly the upright Chief Justice in “ King Henry the Fourth ”¹ may also have yielded traits to the “ Reuerend Iudge.”

The “ excellent Actor ” was written with a double purpose, to defend the acting profession against the attacks of a rival “ characterist,” John Stephens, and to offer homage to the “ Roscius ” of his day, Richard Burbage,² who is referred to in the passage :

“ By his action he fortifies morall precepts with example ; for what we see him personate, we thinke truely done before vs : a man of a deepe thought might apprehend, the Ghosts of our ancient *Heroes* walk’t againe, and take him (at seuerall times) for many of them. Hee is much affected to painting, and tis a question, whether that make him an excellent Plaier, or his playing an exquisite

¹ Cf. ii. Henry IV. v. 2.

² Referred to by Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair* (v. 3) :

“ Which is your Burbage now ?

Your best actor, your Field ?

painter. Hee addes grace to the Poets labours : for what in the Poet is but ditty, in him is both ditty and musicke."

As it is known of Shakespeare that he impersonated the ghost in Hamlet, the words "the Ghosts of our ancient Heroes" might be taken to imply a reference to him. But Shakespeare¹ had retired when this "character" was written, and his reputation was not being assailed by Stephens. The clue is rather to be sought in the lines: "He is much affected to painting, and tis a question, whether that make him an excellent Plaier, or his playing an exquisite painter." Thus the "excellent Actor" must have been a clever artist, and in that case nobody else than Burbage,² two of whose pictures are still extant.

The defence of the stage and of actors has been largely borrowed from Nashe's "Pierce Penilesse His Sypplication To The Divell" (1592).³ To illustrate this extracts from the "Sypplication" and the "excellent Actor" are given side by side:⁴

The defence of Playes.

"To this effect, the pollicie of Playes is very necessary, howsoever some shallow-braind censurers (not the deepest serchers into the secrets of gouernment) mightily oppugne them. For whereas the after-noone beeing the idlest time of

An excellent Actor.

Whatsoever is commendable in the graue Orator, is most exquisitly perfect in him; for by a full and significant action of body, he charmes our attention: sit in a full Theater, and you will thinke you see so

¹ Perhaps Shakespeare is the "Poet" mentioned, as both he and Burbage belonged to the same company, the "lord chamberlain's players," who were licensed to act what plays they liked at the Globe (17 May, 1603).

² Richard Burbage (1567?-1619), son of James Burbage, the manager and actor, achieved great successes in Hamlet, Lear and Othello, but was most famous for his impersonation of Richard III. (Cf. D.N.B. vii. 285-289, and as to his skill in painting p. 288, 289; also in the Jahrbuch d. deutsch. Shaksp. Gesells. xlii. p. 312, 1906). The rôles Burbage excelled in are thus enumerated in the "excellent Actor": "this day one plaies a Monarch, the next a priuate person. Heere one Acts a Tyrant, on the morrow an Exile: A Parasite this man to-night, to-morrow a Precisian, and so of diuers others."

³ Nashe (MK.) i. pp. 211, 212.

⁴ Except for a few omissions they are *in extenso*. It is natural that the later author did not put forward the arguments in the same order he found them in Pierce Penilesse.

the day ; wherein men that are their owne masters (as Gentlemen of the Court, the Innes of the Courte, and the number of Captaines and Souldiers about *London*) do wholly bestow themselves vpon pleasure, and that pleasure they deuide (howe vertuously it skills not) either into gameing, following of harlots, drinking, or seeing a Playe : is it not then better (since of foure extreames all the world cannot keepe them but they will choose one) that they should betake them to the least, which is Playes ? Nay, what if I prooue Playes to be no extreame ; but a rare exercise of vertue ? First, for the subiect of them (for the most part) it is borrowed out of our English Chronicles, wherein our forefathers valiant acts (that haue line long buried in rustie brasse and worme-eaten bookes) are reuiued, and they themselves raised from the Graue of Obliuion, and brought to pleade their aged Honours in open presence : than which, what can be a sharper reproofe to these degenerate effeminate dayes of ours ?

How would it haue ioyed braue *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at seuerall times), who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.

many lines drawne from the circumference of so many eares, whiles the *Actor* is the *Center*. . . . By his action he fortifies morall precepts with example ; for what we see him personate, we thinke truely done before vs : a man of a deepe thought might apprehend, the Ghosts of our ancient *Heroes* walk't againe, and take him (at seuerall times) for many of them. . . .

He entertaines vs in the best leasure of our life, that is betweene meales, the most vnfit time, either for study or bodily exercise : the flight of Hawkes, and chase of wilde beastes, either of them are delights noble : but some think this sport of men the worthier, despite all *calumny*. All men haue been of his occupation : and indeed, what hee doth fainedly, that doe others essentially : this day one plaies a Monarch, the next a priuate person. Heere one Acts a Tyrant, on the morrow an Exile : A Parasite this man to night, to-morrow a Precisian, and so of diuers others. I obserue, of all men liuing, a worthy Actor in one kind is the strongest motiue of affection that can be :

I will defend it against any Collian, or clubfisted Vsurer of them all, there is no immortalitie can be giuen a man on earth like vnto Playes." . . .

*The due commendation of
Ned Allen.*

"Not *Roscius* nor *Æsope*, those admyred tragedians that haue liued euer since before Christ was borne, could euer performe more in action than famous *Ned Allen*. I must accuse our Poets of sloth and partialitie, that they will not boast in large impressions what worthy men (aboue all Nations) *England* affoord." ¹

for when he dies, we cannot be perswaded any man can doe his parts like him.

On the first appearance of the "excellent Actor" (vi.b, 1615) one finds this "character" including an acrimonious and vulgar paragraph suppressed in all subsequent editions, because no doubt it interrupted the otherwise pleasant portrayal of the "Actor." As it began the quarrel between the contributors to Overbury's Characters and John Stephens it will be necessary to quote it : ²

"Therefore the imitating Characterist was extreame idle in calling them Rogues. His Muse it seemes, with all his loud inuocation, could not be wak't to light him a snuffe to read the Statute : for I would let his malicious ignorance vnderstand, that Rogues are not to be imploide as maine ornaments to his Maesties Reuels ; but the itch of bestriding the Presse, or getting vp on this wodden Pacolet, hath defil'd more innocent paper, then euer did Laxatiue Physicke : yet is their inuention such tyred stuffe, that like the Kentish Post-horse they can not go beyond their ordinary stage, should you flea them."

The "imitating Characterist" referred to was John Stephens, the possible hero of the "Rimer." He incurred this attack by his "character" of "A common Player," in which he exposed the "seamy side" of the theatrical life

¹ Ibid. p. 215.

² This insertion follows the sentence, ". . . when he dies, we cannot be perswaded any man can doe his parts like him."

of that time. Stephens in his "Satirical Essayes"¹ was an imitator and declared rival of the Overbury group of writers. His "character," iii. "A good Husband," is evidently an imitation of "A good Wife" and "A good Woman." Being himself utterly devoid of humour and unable to recognize it elsewhere, Stephens also wrote "An honest Lawyer" as a refutation of the "meere Common Lawyer." His rivalry of Overbury is seen in the preface he dedicates "To the People":

"Yet, if thou canst beleue that perfect sense and meanings be not onely tied to publick fauourites, thou needst not bee ashamed to iustifie both mee and mine: If (otherwise) thou canst not relish, blame thy selfe onely, at thy owne perill."

As will be seen Stephens' style² is bombastic, but he is usually dull, most especially when he launches out into verse.

In the second edition³ of the "Essayes and Characters" (1615) there is a vituperative answer to the anonymous author of the "excellent Actor." Also a fairly long poem by Jo. Cocke⁴ is added, in the midst of which the latter, suddenly relapsing into prose, claims the authorship of

¹ Satyri | cal Essayes, | Characters and Others. | or *Accurate* and quick De | scriptions, fitted to the | life of their Subiects. | London, | Printed by *Nicholas Okes*, and are to be sold | by *Roger Barnes*, at his Shop in Saint Dun | stanes Church-yard, 1615 |.

This book appeared anonymously. The "common Player" will be found on pp. 244-249.

² Cf. the following passage culled from the same book: "That proues him (*i.e.* the author of the 'excellent Actor') ranke-bestiall, descended from the walking Apes; which on the Mountaines seeme carefull Inhabitants, but at your approach, the formality of man onely."

³ Essayes | and Characters, | Ironicall and | Instructive. | The second impression. | With a new Satyre in defence of | Common Law and Lawyers: Mixt | with reproofe against their | common Enemy. | With many new Characters, and diuers | other things added; and euery | thing amended. | By John Stephens the yonger, | of Lincolnes Inne, Gent. | London. | Printed by *E. Alde* for *Phillip Knight*, | and are to be solde at his shop in | Chancery lane ouer against | the Rowles. 1615 |—This was reprinted by Halliwell in his "Books of Characters," London, 1857. (In only 25 copies.)

⁴ "Such a most busie Daw did seeme to dresse My * Characters (vnknowne) with saucinesse. * I am heere enforced to claime 3 Characters following the *Wife*: viz. the *Tinker*, the *Apparatour*, and *Almanack-maker*, that I may signify the ridiculous and bold dealing of an vnknowne botcher: But I neede make no question what he is: for his hackney similitudes discover him to be the Rayler aboue mentioned, whosoeuer that rayler be."

the "Tinker," "Apparatour," and "Almanacke-maker," which are found in the Overbury collection (vi.a. 1615). A third (?) edition of "New Essayes and Characters," in all other respects a duplicate of the edition entitled "Essayes and Characters, second impression, 1615," appeared in 1631.

The quarrel between the contributors to the "Overbury Characters" and Stephens makes some points distinct. Firstly, that the latter did not know the author of the "excellent Actor" or "meere Common Lawyer,"¹ nor does he attribute any "character" appearing after the second impression to Overbury. Secondly, that Overbury's Characters were very popular.² Thirdly, the authorship of the "Tinker, Apparatour and Almanacke-maker" was claimed by John Cocke.

In quality the "characters" of Stephens are inferior to those of the "Overbury" group, both as regards terseness and epigrammatic point. Stephens turned out a great quantity of "poetry," and is held up to ridicule in the "Rimer." This "character" follows the "excellent Actor" with but the "Franklin" and "Purueiour of Tobacco" between. The following lines are taken from Stephens' "Reprooffe," a prosy "Essay" some twenty-one pages long, written after the appearance of the "excellent Actor":³

"Let vs a while examine your delight
And search the wounds where you most deeply bite
You bring a large confused heap of noyse,
Reioinders, writs, and vocall empty Toyes,
To proue the lawes discredit; then you ioyne
A Lawyers hearty loue to yellow coyne;
And then you snarle against our simple French
As if you had beene pepperd with your wench:

¹ If he had, he would have mentioned the "Rayler's" name.

² Cf. Stephens' address "To the People," p. 60.

³ Stephens is mentioned by Bliss in his edition of Earle, cf. Mic. (B-I) p. 235, and also by Morley, C.W. p. 153. Bliss reprinted Stephens' Essay i. On Cowardlinesse; he guessed that Stephens was replying to an attack made on him by "the editor of, or one of the contributors to, the later copies of Sir Thomas Overbury's 'Wife,' etc." But Bliss seems to have been unaware of the provocative passage in the "excellent Actor" (vi.b, 1615).

And then right harmeless Dulman doth inchant
 The Scène ;¹ with teaching Latine how to Cant.
 O most rare subiect and bewitching Scène !
 Able to make the fattest hearer leane ;
 If he would truly thinke how little paines
 Doth fasten credit vpon lucky straines,
 When full deseruings proue infortunate :
 And neither purchase fame, in loue, nor hate.”

This is the liveliest passage in the “ Reproofe.”² The remainder is a wail that anyone could hold a low opinion of his “ mother, English Common Law,” or could believe that all “ Common Lawyers ” were not ideals of mankind.

“ A Rimer ” is as follows :

“(He) Is a fellow whose face is hatcht all ouer with impudence, and should he be hanged or pilloried tis armed for it. He is a Juggler with words, yet practises the Art of most vncleanly conueiance. Hee doth boggle very often ; and because himselfe winks at it, thinkes tis not perceiued : the maine thing that euer hee did, was the tune hee sang to. There is no thing in the earth so pittifull, no not an Ape-carier ; he is not worth thinking of, and therefore I must leaue him as nature left him, a Dunghill not well laide together.”

In this very short “ character ” the sentence :

“ Hee doth boggle very often ; and because himselfe winks at it, thinkes tis not perceiued.”

may be aimed at

“ If (otherwise) thou canst not relish, blame thy selfe onely, at thy owne perill.”

The face “ hatcht all ouer with impudence,” that was ready for the gallows or pillory, is a personal attack provoked perhaps by the immodest tone of Stephens’ address “ To the People.”

The “ character ” of the “ Franklin,” the sturdy farmer,

¹ Ridicule directed against : “ He doth not striue to make nature monstrous, she is often seen in the same Scène with him.”—*excellent Actor*.

² *Essayes and Characters*, Second Impression, 1615, p. 38. The other “ poems ” are tame ; this passage shows Stephens in all the eloquence of fury.

presents the masculine equivalent to the "Milke-mayd." It does not seem to be drawn from any play; references occur to the notorious oppression to which possessors of small or copy-right holdings were subject. But the author passes over these wrongs too gently to have belonged to the class of "Franklins" himself, or to have come in close contact with them.

The sub-group containing the "meere Pettyfogger," "Ingrosser of Corne" and "Diuellish Vsurer" (all in vi.b, 1615), and the "Couetous man" and "Creditour" (both in ix., 1616) may be compared with the "Penurious Man" and "Avaricious Man" of Theophrastus.

All these five "characters" show great family likeness due to the common motive, greed, ruling their actions. But each is well defined, though a passage¹ in the "Couetous man" (who is a miser into the bargain) would be more appropriate to the "Ingrosser of Corne." These five types of men were probably well known by bitter experience to the writers of "Overbury's Characters," and it seems scarcely likely that stereotyped stage figures had to be resorted to as originals. But certain catch-words and situations in the plays may have been utilized, and thus dramatic characters have entered into the composition. It will therefore be necessary to examine each "character" separately in order to determine the exact amount of borrowing in each case.

The "meere Pettyfogger" has received many traits from "Dampit," "the famous infamous trampler of his time,"² but is unlike this worthy in that he was as well known in the country as at Westminster. But then Dampit was just an ordinary pettifogger—a very dirty one to be sure—and thus one of a large company. There

¹ It runs thus: "He had rather haue the frame of the world fall then the price of corne."

² Cf. "Trick to Catch the Old One, i. 4, and iv. 5, Middleton, M. i. pp. 14 ff and 70 ff.

was no lack of originals, and the ways of pettifoggers were perhaps never more notorious in England than in the beginning of the Seventeenth Century, when all classes of society were intently occupied in plundering one another.¹

In the case of the "Ingrosser of Corne" more solid proof of dependence on a dramatic original may be instanced. The "Ingrosser" seems to be Sordido in Ben Jonson's "Every Man out of his Humour," who, we are told,² is

"A wretched hob-nailed chuff, whose recreation is reading of almanacks; and felicity, foul weather. One that never prayed but for a lean dearth, and ever wept in a fat harvest."

The "Ingrosser of Corne" begins thus:

"There is no Vermine in the Land like him: He slaunders both Heauen and Earth with pretended Dearth, when there's no cause of scarcitie."

Later on we hear:

When his Barnes and Garners are ful (if it be a time of dearth) he will buy halfe a bushell i' th' Market to serue his Houshold: and winnowes his Corne in the night, lest, as the chaffe throwne vpon the water, shew'd plentie in *Ægypt*; so his (carried by the winde) should proclayme his abundance. . . ." The Poore hee accounts the Iustices intelligencers, and cannot abide them: he complaynes of our negligence of discovering new parts of the World, only to rid them from our Clymate."

Sordido remarks³:

"I'll instantly set all my hinds to thrashing
Of a whole rick of corn, which I will hide
Under the ground; and with the straw thereof
I'll stuff the outside of my other mows:
That done, I'll have them empty all my garners,
And in the friendly earth bury my store,
That, when the searchers come, they may suppose
All's spent
Each market-day I will be seen to buy
Part of the purest wheat, as for my household. . . ."

¹ Cf. H. Hall, *Society in the Elizabethan Age*, Swan Sonnenschein, 1902, Chapt. x. "The Lawyer," p. 133 ff. Popham is a characteristic figure of the age.

² G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 63. Cf. "Characters of the Persons" to "Every Man out of his Humour."

³ Ibid. p. 78 (b).

His opinion of the poor is¹ :

“O, but (say some) the poor are like to starve.
 Why, let 'em starve, what's that to me? . . .
 Why such are these that term themselves the poor,
 Only because they would be pitied,
 But are indeed a sort of lazy beggars,
 Licentious rogues, and sturdy vagabonds,
 Bred by the sloth of a fat plenteous year, . . .
 And this is all that these cheap times are good for :
 Whereas a wholesome and penurious dearth
 Purges the soil of such vile excrements,
 And kills the vipers up.”

The “Diuellish Vsurer” cannot be said to be based on any especial personage in drama, although Shylock, Barabbas, and perhaps Dampit have suggested traits. Especially Dampit's² bed of sickness seems reflected in the passage :

“And for his death, 'tis either Surfet, the Pox, or Despaire ; for seldome such as he dye of Gods making, as honest men should doe.”

The “Vsurer” has some parallels with Hall's “characters” “Of the Covetous.”³ They are as follows :

COVETOUS.

“He breeds of money to the third generation, neither hath it sooner any being, than he sets it to beget more.”

“He lets money, and sells time for a price, and will not be importuned either to prevent or defer his day.”

“No man complains so much of want, to avoid a subsidy.”

“For himself, he is still

VSURER.

“He puts his money to the vnnatural Act of generation ; and his Scriuener is the superuisor Bawd to 't.”

“He doth not giue, but sells daies of Payment ; and those at the rate of a mans vndoing.”

“He remooues his lodging when a Subsidy comes ; and if hee be found out, and pay it, he grumbles Treason.”

“His clothes plead prescrip-

¹ Ibid. p. 78 (a).

² Cf. “Trick to Catch the Old One,” iv. 5, Middleton, M. i. p. 67 ff.

³ Cf. Morley, C.W. pp. 142, 143.

known by his forefather's coat, which he means with his blessing to bequeath to the many descents of his heirs.”

tion; and whether they or his body are more rotten, is a question: yet should he live to be hangd in them; this good they would doe him, The very Hangman would pittie his case.”

Thus, though the figure of the Usurer was a very well-known one, it will be seen that the author of this sketch was more indebted to Hall than to any “stock” character of the stage.¹

The “Couetous man” shows much similarity to Lucre in Middleton's “Trick to Catch the Old One,” but he is more of a miser. It will be sufficient to quote one passage:

“His morning prayer is to ouerlooke his bagges, whose euery parcel begets his adoration. Then to his studies, which are how to cousen this tennant, begger that Widdow or to vndoe some Orphane.”

This reminds one of Lucre's soliloquy, when he hears his nephew is likely to marry a rich widow:

“This falls unhappily that he should bear a grudge to me now, being likely to prove so rich. . . . Hum,—I hope he has not so much wit to apprehend that I cozened him: . . . marry, that's his mortgage; but that I ne'er mean to give him: I'll make him rich enough in words, if that be good . . . there may be hope some of the widow's lands, too, may one day fall upon me, if things be carried wisely.”²

Later on in the same scene:

“Ha, ha! 'twill do me more secret joy than my last purchase, more precious comfort than all these widow's revenues.”³

Besides utilizing the figure of Lucre, the author of the “Couetous man” has obtained material from Hall's “character” of the same name, as can be seen in the following extracts:

¹ Cf. Addendum, p. 93.

² Middleton (M. 1, p. 22): “Trick to Catch the Old One,” ii. 1.

³ Ibid. p. 23.

Hall's "Covetous [Man]"¹

... "would despatch himself when corn falls, but that he is loth to cast away money on a cord."

"He breeds of money to the third generation, neither hath it sooner any being, than he sets it to beget more."

"If his servant break but an earthen dish for want of light, he abates it out of his quarter's wages."

Overbury's "Couetous man."

"At the grant of a new subsidie he would gladly hang himselfe, were it not for the charge of buying a Rope". . .

"His vse is doubled, and noe one sixpence begot or borne, but presently by an vntimely thrifte it is getting more."

"He neuer spends candle but at Christmas (when he has them for new-yeeres gifts) in hope that his seruants will breake glasses for want of light, which they dublie pay for in there wages."

In the last instance it is interesting to note how a passage in Theophrastus' "Penurious Man"² has been borrowed by Hall and extended. The contributor of the "Couetous man" to Overbury's Characters in turn borrowed it from Hall and still further enlarged it. According to Jebb's translation the original runs thus :

"When a servant has broken a jug or plate he [*i.e.* the 'Penurious Man'] will take the value out of his rations."

In the "Trick to Catch the Old One," three creditors appear, who may be the originals of the "Creditour." These gentry are met with in almost all the comedies written about 1600, but one passage in the "Creditour" seems to indicate special indebtedness to Middleton. It is as follows :

"Euery Tearme he sets vp a Tenters in Westminster Hall, vpon which he racks and stretches gentlemen like English broadcloth, beyond the staple of the wooll, till the threeds cracke, and that causeth them with the least wet to shrink, and presently to weare bare. Marrie he handles a citizen (at least if himselfe be one) like a peece of Spanish

¹ Morley, C.W. pp. 142, 143.

² Cf. Jebb, p. 147 ff. Jebb noted the dependence of Hall on Theophrastus and that of "Overbury" on Hall. Cf. Introduction, ii.

cloth, giues him onely a twitch, and straynes him not too hard, knowing how apt he is to breake of himselfe, and then he can cut nothing out of him but shreds. To the one he comes like Tamburlaine with his blacke and bloody flags. But to the other his white one hangs out. And (vpon the parley) rather then faile, he takes ten groates i' th' pound for his ransome and so lets him march away with bagge and baggage."

In the "Trick to Catch the Old One," Witgood,¹ caught by the creditors says :

"Give me but reasonable time, and I protest I'll make you ample satisfaction."

1st Cred. Do you talk of reasonable time to us ?

Wit. 'Tis true, beasts know no reasonable time.

2nd Cred. We must have either money or carcass.

Wit. Alas, what good will my carcass do you ?

3rd Cred. O, 'tis a secret delight we have amongst us ! we that are used to keep birds in cages, have the heart to keep men in prison, I warrant you.

Witgood, by a trick, prevails on Hoard to pay his debts for him.

Hoard. Ah-a-a ! and what come his debts to now ?

1st Cred. Some eight score odd pounds, sir.

Hoard. Naw, naw, naw, naw, naw ! tell me the second time ; give me a lighter sum ; they are but desperate debts, you know . . . come, come, you shall have ten shillings in the pound, and the sum down roundly.

1st Cred. You must make it a mark, sir.

Hoard. Go to then, tell your money in the meantime ; you shall find little less there. . . ."

The creditors accept a smaller sum, as we see later :

Hoard. How now ? is't right, my masters ?

1st Cred. 'Tis something wanting, sir ; yet it shall be sufficient.

Another passage in the "Creditour" is as follows :

"He is the bloud hound of the law, and hunts counter very swiftly and with great iudgement. He hath a quick sent to smell out his gayne and a good deep mouth to pursue it, yet neuer opens but when he bytes, and bytes not but he killes, or at least drawes blood and then he pincheth most doggedly."

¹ Middleton, M. i. pp. 57 ; 65, 66. "A Trick to Catch the Old One," iv. 3, 4.

The same idea (found elsewhere too¹) occurs in the "Trick to Catch the Old One" (iv. 3).

1st Cred. What, boy?

Boy. The rioter is caught.

1st Cred. So, so, so, so! it warms me to the heart;

I love a' life to see dogs upon men.

O, here he comes."

The three creditors in this play are not individualized; they might easily be reduced to one, and this would be a kind of stock figure from which the "Creditour" was formed.

The Greeks do not seem to have known the fanatical "religious" impostor, the subject of the next sub-group, as Theophrastus only describes the harmless, if foolish "Superstitious Man." In Overbury's book five "characters" appear, of which the "Puritane" (v. 1614), the "Precisian" (vi.a 1615), the "Button-maker of Amsterdam" (vi.b 1615) represent the Protestant, and the "Jesuite" (vi.b. 1615) the Catholic bodies, whilst the "Hypocrite" (vi.a 1615) embraces all the creeds. All of these men portrayed are under the influence of superstition rather than religion, which they exploit for their own advantage.

The "Puritane," "Precisian," and "Button-maker of Amsterdam"² exhibit the spirit of "contradiction," a fanatical hatred of all that "the church enjoins," for instance the ring in marriage, the sign of the cross in baptism, or the cross on books of a sacred nature—the "Button-maker"

"accounts St. Georges Feast the prophanest, because of S. Georges Crosse."

¹ In the "Roaring Girl" by Middleton and Dekker, but applied to "Sergeants," Cf. p. 115.

² "Wee must make a difference betweene our stricter people in England, whom your prophaner sort call precisians, and these who are super-intendants over a few *button-makers* and weavers at *Amsterdam*."—Peacham's *Truth of our Times*, 1638, p. 153. (Quoted from Rimbault's *Overbury's Works*, p. 298.)

Cf. also Middleton (M. i. p. 209): Chaste Maid in Cheapside, iii. 2.

Therefore they postpone their feasting, if possible, to Good Friday. They detest organs in churches; in fact the Precisian

"thinkes euery Organist is in the state of damnation."

He also

"chuseth sooner to be half hanged, then to see a leg at the *Name* of *Jesus*, or one stand at the *Creede*."

Other traits shared by all the "stricter people" in common consist of ignorance, hypocrisy, and a presumption, which cause the "Precisian" to

"challenge the *Almighty*, to talke with him *Ex tempore*,"

[be] "so sure of *his* saluation, that he will not change places in heauen, with the *Virgin Marie*, without boote,"

or the "Puritane" to use "single prayers" because he

"eyther feares a learned Faith, or doubts God vnderstands not at first hearing,"

and the "Button-maker" to wink when he prays, because he

"thinkes he knowes the way so now to heauen, that he can finde it blindefold."

All these figures have much in common, but each one has in addition some individual peculiarities. A more perfect generalization is shown in each successive sketch. Thus the composition of the "character" of the "Puritane" is confused, and traits caused by the same motive reoccur in it. But the striving of the puritans after worldly power is mentioned.¹ The "Precisian" sums up the traits at the commencement, and shows that the religion of this narrow-minded fanatic consists merely of a flat contradiction of all that the Church (Protestant or Catholic) has accepted. It also exposes the sophistry of the "precise." The "Button-maker," possessing all the characteristics of the English puritans, has two features added, namely lack

¹ James hoped by means of his pamphlets on Divinity to convince the puritans of their errors. But Ben Jonson and the "characterists" possessed a deeper insight into the real, the political aims of the puritans, and warned the court, but in vain. Cf. G-C. (Ben Jonson) ii. p. 209, Note 1.

of sense of duty,¹ and a craving for the pleasures of the table.²

Remembering that the "Overbury" writers had so many living hypocritical puritans in real life to sit to them as models, it is not easy to determine in these "characters" the amount of their dependence on the plays of their time. Many of these contain personages that are "Precisians," "Banbury Men," or "Amsterdam Brethren," names under which the puritans were known, and it is almost needless to state that their characters were carefully developed and tallied almost exactly with those of the "Puritane" and his likes. However some similarities found in the "characters" to passages in the "Alchemist" and "Bartholomew Fair" seem to imply an indebtedness to Ben Jonson. The latter play especially, acted for the first time on Oct 31st, 1614, may have provided much of the material for the three "characters."

As the "Puritane," "Precisian" and "Button-maker" have so much in common, their sources may have been the same. All of them show great likeness to "Rabbi Busy," the "Banbury Man," whose casuistry is exposed in the first scene of "Bartholomew Fair."³ The hollowness of the religion professed by the puritans and the hypocrisy and corruption existing among them is vividly painted by Dame Purecraft,⁴ and a good specimen of their ranting can be found in Act v. Sc. 3, where⁵ Busy argues in the Puppet-show. The "Puritane" and the "Button-maker" are, as we have seen, great gluttons, and, holding that

¹ "A Button-maker of Amsterdame Is one that is fled ouer from his *Conscience*; and left his wife and children vpon the Parish."

² "If there be a great feast in the Town, though most of the wicked (as hee calles them) be there, he wil be sure to be a guest, and to out-eat sixe of the fattest *Burgers*." This trait is also shared by the "Puritane," who "Where the meate is best, there he confutes most; for his arguing is but the efficacie of his eating: good bits he holds breeds good positions; and the Pope he best concludes against in Plumbroth."

³ Cf. G-C. (Ben Jonson) ii. p. 157. Barth. Fair, i. 1.

⁴ Ibid. v. 2, p. 196. [Dame Purecraft appears in the "Micro-cosmographie" as "A Shee-precise Hypocrite," 43.]

⁵ Ibid. pp. 205-8. Other similarities to the three "characters" under consideration may be found in iii. 1. p. 181-2; iv. 1, p. 183-4; iv. 4, p. 193-5.

“good bits breed good positions” “out-eat six of the fattest Burgers.” “Right hypocrites, good gluttons,” says Knockem, an expert in puritans it would seem.¹ Rabbi Busy is of the same persuasion :

“ In the way of comfort to the weak, I will go and eat. I will eat exceedingly, and prophesy. . . .”²

His performance is equal to his promise, according to Knockem :

“ An excellent right hypocrite ! and now his belly is full, he falls a railing and kicking, the jade. A very good vapour ! I’ll in, and joy Ursula [the ‘ pig-woman ’], with telling how her pig works ; two and a half he eat to his share ; and he has drunk a pail-full.”³

Besides Busy and Dame Purecraft, Ben Jonson has created two other puritan figures in his “ Alchemist.” They are “ Tribulation Wholesome, a pastor of Amsterdam,” and “ Ananias, a deacon there.” Their actions are even more unscrupulous than any of those of our three “ characters.” We are thus introduced to them⁴ :

Subtle [the Alchemist]. What are you, sir ?

Ananias. Please you, a servant of the exiled brethren,

That deal with widows’ and with orphans’ goods, . . .
A deacon.

Subtle. O, you are sent from Master Wholsome,
Your teacher ?

Ananias. From Tribulation Wholsome,
Our very zealous pastor.

They are greedy of gold, and are easily gulled by the Alchemist. Their wealth is to be spent for political purposes. They recognize⁵ no laws except their own interpretation of the Mosaic code, and to obtain wealth authorize Subtle to “ coin ” money for them.⁶

Tribulation. Ay ; but stay,
This act of coining, is it lawful ?

¹ Ibid. p. 172 (iii. 1).

² Ibid. p. 157 (i. 1).

³ Ibid. p. 181.

⁴ Ibid. p. 33, Alchemist ii. 1. Their management of the widows’ and orphans’ goods was corrupt.

⁵ Cf. “ A Puritane Is a diseas’d peece of *Apocripha*: binde him to the Bible, and hee corrupts the whole Text . . . his life is but a borrowed blast of winde ; For betwene two religions, as betweene two doores, hee is euer whistling.”

⁶ G-C. (Ben Jonson) ii. p. 40. Alchemist, iii. 2.

Ananias. Lawful !

We know no magistrate : or, if we did,
This is foreign coin.

Subtle. It is no coining, sir.

It is but casting.

Trib. Ha ! You distinguish well :

Casting of money may be lawful.¹

Ananias. 'Tis, sir.

Trib. Truly, I take it so.

Having thus satisfied their consciences, the two saints "make a question of it" to their brethren, who, as could not be doubted, approve of the measure.

Thus we see, almost all the traits given to the puritan group among Overbury's Characters may be found in Ben Jonson's "precise" figures. That no sincere or honest puritans are described by the "characterists" is perhaps due to the attacks made against the stage by the religious sects.

The "character" of the "Hypocrite" has many features of the puritan group, but is more extended in its scope. Hypocrites are to be found amongst adherents of all creeds. Hall, who also wrote a "character" of this name, described one that would flourish in the Anglican Church rather than amongst the precisians. Both writers seem independent of each other.

The very "conceited" character of the Jesuit probably is drawn from the popular idea of the plotting Spanish seminarist, who was so feared, hated and persecuted during the reigns of Elizabeth and James.

The next sub-group, corresponding somewhat to Theophrastus' "Newsmaker"² consists of the "affected Traueller" (ii. 1614), the "Almanacke-maker" (vi. 1615, claimed by John Cocke, cf. pp. 60, note 4, and p. 61), and

¹ "A Precisian . . . dare commit any sinne gilded with a pretence of sanctity. . . . To steal he holds it lawfull, so it be from the wicked and *Egyptians*."

² Cf. Jebb, p. 135 ff.

the "Quacksaluer." However heterogeneous these "characters" may seem at first sight, they have a common motive, namely, a lack of truthfulness.

The "affected Traueller" probably came from Overbury's own pen. Before appearing at Court, and again in 1609 Overbury had travelled,¹ but, being an observant and clever man, had not degenerated into an "Italionate Englishman." Indeed, so far from being corrupted by his stay abroad, he had brought with him a fair stock of observation,² and a clear insight into men. His presence at court seems to have had a beneficial influence.³

Overbury, therefore, is not caricaturing himself, but rather the numerous "travelled" fantastics (such as Coryat), who had been swarming in London for some time. One of these is thus described by Nashe in his "vpstart" and "counterfeit polititian"⁴:

"Al *Italionato* is his talke, & his spade peake is as sharpe as if he had been a Pioner before the walls of *Roan*. Hee will despise the barbarisme of his own Couñtrei, & tel a whole Legend of lyes of his trauailes vnto *Constantinople*. You shall see a dapper Iacke, that hath been but ouer at *Deepe*, wring his face round about, as a man would stir vp a mustard pot, & talke English through ^o/_y teeth, like *Iaques Scabd-hams*, or *Monsieur Mingo de Moustrap*: when (poore slaue) he hath but dipt his bread in wilde Boares greace, and come home againe; or been bitten by the shins by a wolfe: and saith, he hath aduentured vpon the Barricadoes of *Gurney* or *Guingan*, and fought with the yong *Guise* hand to hand.

Some thinke to be counted rare Politicians and Statesmen, by being solitary: as who would say, I am a wise man, a braue man, *Secreta mea mihi: Frustra sapit, qui sibi non sapit*; and there is no man worthy of my companie or friendship: when, although he goes vngartred like a malecontent Cutpurse, & wearcs his hat ouer his eies like one of the curscd crue, yet cānot his stabling dagger, or his nittie loue-lock, keep him out of the legend of fantastical cockscombs."⁵

¹ Cf. p. 10, Note 7.

² Perhaps, too, a repugnance for religious fanaticism, that earned for him the epithet of atheist. Cf. p. 13.

³ Cf. Jonson's praise of Overbury at court, pp. 12, 13.

⁴ Nashe (MK.) i. 169, 170. 'Pierce Penilesse.'

⁵ In the "Sypplication" many descriptions occur which almost might be considered "characters." I enumerate a few: The description of Greedines.

“An affected Traueller” we are told

“Is a speaking fashion; he hath taken paines to bee ridiculous, and hath seen more than he hath perceiued. His attire speakes *French* or *Italian*, and his *gate* cryes *Behold mee*. He censures all things by countenances and shrugs, and speakes his owne language with shame and lispings: he will choake rather than confesse *Beere* good drinke: and his pick tooth is a maine part of his behauiour. Hee chooseth rather to be counted as *Spie* then not a *Polititian*: and maintaines his reputation by naming great men familiarly. He chooseth rather to tell lyes then not wonders, and talkes with men singly. . . .”

This also reminds us of Rosalind’s words (*As You Like It*, iv. 1):

“Farewell, Monsieur Traveller: look you lisp and wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your own country, be out of love with your nativity and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola.”

In *King John* (i. 1) the Bastard thus describes an imaginary conversation with a “Traueller”:

. “Now your traveller,
He and his toothpick at my worship’s mess,
And when my knightly stomach is sufficed,
Why then I suck my teeth and catechize
My picked man of countries: ‘My dear sir,’
Thus, leaning on my elbow, I begin,
‘I shall beseech you’—that is question now;
And then comes answer like an Absey book:
‘O sir,’ says answer, ‘at your best command;
At your employment; at your service, sir:’
‘No, sir,’ says question, ‘I, sweet sir, at yours:’
And so, ere answer knows what question would,
Saving in dialogue of compliment,
And talking of the Alps and Apennines,
The Pyrenean and the river Po,
It draws toward supper in conclusion so.”

of dame Nigardize; The prodigall yoong Master; The pride of the learned, of Marchants wiues, of pesants sprung vp of nothing, of the Spaniard, Italian, French man, dane; The eight kinds of drunkennesse. From these “descriptions” the borrowings of the Overbury “characterists” have been slight on the whole.

In the "character" the conversation of the Traueller is described in following terms :

"his discourse sounds big but meanes nothing . . . at night in an Ordinarie hee confesseth the businesse in hand, and seemes as conversant with all intents and plots, as if he begot them . . . hee offereth curtesies, to shew them, rather then himselfe humble."

"Italionate Trauellers" have also been held up to ridicule by Ben Jonson in three plays, and in these too, Overbury found models for his "characters" ready to hand. These are Puntarvolo (in *Every Man out of his Humour*, acted 1599), Amorphus (in *Cynthia's Revels*, 1600), and Sir Politick Would-be (in *Volpone*, 1605). The "affected Traueller" shows greatest similarity to the last of them, although he has traits in common with Puntarvolo and Amorphus. Thus Puntarvolo¹ is :

"A vain-glorious knight, over-englishing his travels, and wholly consecrated to singularity. . . . Of presence good enough, but so palpably affected to his own praise, that for want of flatterers he commends himself to the floutage of his own family. He deals upon returns, and strange performances, resolving, in despite of public derision, to stick to his own particular fashion, phrase, and gesture."

Amorphus² is Puntarvolo brought to a higher stage of development. He, too, has suggested some of the peculiarities of the "affected Traueller." Thus

"He that is with him is Amorphus, a traveller, one so made out of the mixture of shreds of forms, that himself is truly deformed. He walks most commonly with a clove or pick-tooth in his mouth, he is the very mint of compliment, all his behaviours are printed, his face is another volume of essays, and his beard is an Aristarchus. . . . He is his own promoter in every place. The wife of the ordinary gives him his diet to maintain her table in discourse ; which, indeed, is a mere tyranny over her other guests. . . . He will lie cheaper than any beggar, and louder than most clocks. . . . The other gallant is his Zany, and doth most of these tricks after him. . ."

Without requoting (from Overbury) the similar passages

¹ Cf. G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 62. *Every Man out of his Humour: The Character of the Persons.*

² Ibid. p. 161 (*Cynthia's Revels*, ii. 1),

already cited, we notice a further trait in the "affected Traueller," viz.:

"his boy is bound to admire him howsoever."

But perhaps Sir Politick Would-be, uniting in himself to the highest degree that may be found in Ben Jonson's plays the absurdities of "affected Trauellers," stands in nearest relationship to Overbury's "character."

Thus the "affected Traueller's"

"discourse sounds big but meanes nothing. . . . He comes still from great personages, but goes with meane. . . . (He) seemes as conversant with all intents and plots, as if he begot them."

But he is outdone in imagination by Sir Politick.¹

Sir P. Sir,

I knew him [*i.e.* Stone, the fool] one of the most dangerous heads

Living within the state, and so I held him.

Peregrine. Indeed, sir?

Sir P. While he lived, in action.

He has received weekly intelligence,
Upon my knowledge, out of the Low Countries,
For all parts of the world, in cabbages;
And those dispensed again to ambassadors,
In oranges, musk-melons, apricocks,
Lemons, pome-citrons, and such-like; sometimes
In Colchester oysters, and your Selsey cockles.

Per. You make me wonder.

Sir P. Sir, upon my knowledge.

Nay, I've observed him, at your public ordinary,
Take his advertisement from a traveller,
A concealed statesman, in a trencher of meat;
And instantly, before the meal was done,
Convey an answer in a tooth-pick.

The "Traueller's" main feature, namely, that he

"chooseth rather to tell lyes then not wonders, and talkes with men singly"

is seen in Sir Politick's advice to Peregrine²:

Sir P. First, for your garb, it must be grave and serious,
Very reserved and locked; not tell a secret
On any terms, not to your father; scarce

¹ *Ibid.* p. 351 (Fox, ii. 1).

² *Ibid.* p. 375 (Fox, iv. 1).

A fable, but with caution : make sure choice
Both of your company and discourse ; beware
You never speak a truth—

Per. How !

Sir P. Not to strangers,

For those be they you must converse with most. . . .

Of Overbury's "affected Traueller" we hear that "His attire speakes *French* or *Italian*."

Sir P. . . . I now have lived here [in Venice] 'tis some fourteen months :

Within the first week of my landing here,
All took me for a citizen of Venice,
I knew the forms so well"—¹

That "he comes still from great personages, but goes with meane" is demonstrated by Sir Politick :

Sir P. . . . I have at my free hours thought upon
Some certain goods unto the state of Venice,
Which I do call *my Cautions* ; and, sir, which
I mean, in hope of pension, to propound
To the Great Council, then unto the Forty,
So to the Ten. My means are made already—

Peregrine. By whom ?

Sir P. Sir, one that though his place be obscure,
Yet he can sway, and they will hear him. He's
A commandador.

Per. What ! a common serjeant ? ²

In short, the whole of this scene (Act iv. Sc. 1) is summed up accurately by Overbury : "he hath taken paines to bee ridiculous, and hath seen more than he hath perceiued."

The "Almanacke-maker" was probably suggested by the sale of almanacks. This was considerable, because, though they certainly did not offer reliable prophecies as to the coming weather or future events,³ they contained a list of the annual fairs at different market-towns. The country people brought them probably for this last reason, though Sordido's attempted suicide (Every Man out of his Humour, iii. 2) was due to his disappointment in the weather, which turned out fine instead of foul.

¹ Ibid. p. 376.

² Ibid.

³ The "Almanacke-maker" may have suggested to Swift the idea of playing his now historical joke on John Partridge.

The idea of the "Quacksaluer" may have been taken from the well-known scene in the "Fox,"¹ where Volpone disguises himself "as a mountebank Doctor," or from the impostors in Middleton's "Widow."² But quacksalvers were perhaps commoner in the seventeenth century than at present, and were not by any means unknown in England before. They seem to have been plentiful even in the fourteenth century,³ legislation having several times since attempted to check their practices. Therefore, although stage figures of mountebanks may have given hints to the author, it is more probable that he drew his "character" "from the life."

Similar in nature to Theophrastus' "Arrogant Man"⁴ and "Man of Petty Ambition"⁵ is a fairly large sub-group of "characters," containing the "proud Man" (ix. 1616), and the "ignorant glory-hunter" (ii. 1614), as well as the fops. These are the "golden Asse" (ii. 1614), the "Amorist" (ii. 1614), the "Improuident young Gallant" (vi.b 1615), the fine "Gentleman" (ii. 1614), and the "Courtier" (ii. 1614). To these may be added the "Roaring Boy" (vi.b 1615), that peculiar product of the seventeenth century, who has now degenerated into the "Hooligan." Though the "Innes of Court man" is a fop in posse, he rather belongs to the caricatures of the professional men, such as the "Scholer" and "Fellow(s) of a(n) House" and "Common Lawyer" treated in a later chapter.

The "proud Man" seems to have borrowed ideas from Hall's "character" of the "Vainglorious." Thus one reads,⁶ that :

"Or if a more gallant humour possess him [i.e. the Vainglorious

¹ G.-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 353. (Fox, ii. 1).

² Widow N. 2. Middleton, M. ii. p. 453 ff.

³ J. J. Jusserand: English Way-faring Life in the Middle Ages; tr. L. Toulmin Smith, London, 1891, pp. 181-185.

⁴ Cf. Jebb, pp. 89, 90.

⁵ Ibid. p. 99 ff.

⁶ Cf. Morley, C.W. pp. 144, 145.

man], he wears all his land on his back, and walking high, looks over his left shoulder, to see if the point of his rapier follow him with a grace. He is proud of another man's horse, and well mounted, thinks every man wrongs him that looks not at him. A bare head in the street doth him more good than a meal's meat.”

The “proud Man”

“when he weares new cloaths, thinks himselfe wrong'd, if they be not obseru'd, imitated, and his discretion in the choice of his fashion and stuffe applauded, when he vouchsafes to blesse the ayre with his presence . . . and euerie passenger he viewes vnder the eye browes, to obserue wether he vayles his bonnet low enough, which he returnes with an Imperious Nod ; he neuer salutes first, but his farewell is perpetuall.”

Further on we read that the “Vainglorious”

“picks his teeth when his stomach is empty, and calls for pheasants at a common inn.”

The same behaviour we meet in the “proud Man,” who “professeth to keepe his stomacke for the Pheasant or the Quaile, and when they come, he can eatte little—he hath beene so cloyed with them that yeare, although they be the first he saw.”

A further trait both have in common, namely, snobbishness :

“He [*i.e.* the Vainglorious] swears big at an ordinary, and talks of the court with a sharp accent ; neither vouchsafes to name any not honourable, nor those without some term of familiarity, and likes well to see the hearer look upon him amazedly, as if he said, How happy is this man that is so great with great ones !”

Thus, too, the “proud Man” :

“In his discourse he talkes of none but priue counsellours, and is as prone to belie their acquaintance as he is a Ladyes fauours.”¹

The parallels cited will be sufficient to show that the author of the “proud Man” was acquainted with Hall's “Vainglorious,” and has borrowed ideas from this “character.”

The “ignorant glory-hunter” is more original on the whole, and perhaps was written by Overbury ; it contains

¹ The same phrase occurs in the passage (from Ben Jonson) quoted on p. 86. Cf. also note 1, *ibid.*

a passage that might have been suggested by one in Hall's "character" of the "Vainglorious," but probably the similarity is accidental.¹ Thus

"He [*i.e.* the Vainglorious] thrusts himself into the press before some great ladies, and loves to be seen near the head of a great train."

In like manner "In any shew" the "glory-hunter"
"will be one, though hee be but a whiffler or torch-bearer."

But Overbury saw many "ignorant glory-hunters" at court, and there was doubtless always a good supply of whifflers or torch-bearers for Ben Jonson's masques. This "character" was drawn from direct observation.

Coming to the series of fops, it will be seen that all their stages of development are described, and also that most of these "Gallants" appear in the second impression, thus probably emanating from Overbury's pen. Like Thackeray he seems to have had a fine sense for detecting "snobs," and no doubt drew the portraits of the "Gallants" from life, but at the same time made use of the "gulls" appearing in Ben Jonson's comedies.

The series of fops perhaps is as follows :

- (1) The Golden Ass, the embryo gallant, who even if he does not obtain sense, wins experience and develops into
- (2) The Fantastic, the Improvident Young Gallant (written by a later hand), initiated into the "illiberal sciences," which sometimes leaves him rather short of ready money. He may become
- (3) The Fine Gentleman, who has learned to talk like Euphues, and thus is a patented fop. If he has not birth or powerful connections he

¹ Only in the "glory-hunter" and the "Flatterer" among the "characters" which appeared in the second impression do we find parallels with Hall's Characters. They occur singly in each case, and are not sufficient evidence even to show an acquaintance with Hall's book on Overbury's part.

has reached the highest rung in his ladder, but if he is in possession of these requisites he may become

- (4) A Courtier, as shallow a fool as any of them, a mere parasite on the court, who lives on it and in it, and if he be out of it "fish-like breathes destruction, if out of his owne element."

Any of these may become the "Amorist," who is by love "translated out of a man into folly."

The nearest equivalent to the "golden Asse" that can be found in Ben Jonson's plays is Sogliardo. But touches from Asotus are not wanting. The "character" of the former, according to Jonson, is¹:

"Sogliardo, An essential clown, brother to Sordido, yet so enamoured of the name of a gentleman that he will have it, though he buys it. He comes up every term to learn to take tobacco, and see new motions. He is in his kingdom when he can get himself into company where he may be well laughed at."

Sogliardo is later described by Macilente²:

Sog. Why, who am I, sir?

Mac. One of those that fortune favours.

Carlo Buffone. The periphrasis of a fool. I'll observe this better. [*Aside.*

Sog. That fortune favours! how mean you that, friend?

Mac. I mean simply: that you are one that lives not by your wits.

Sog. By my wits! no, sir, I scorn to live by my wits, I. I have better means, I tell thee, than to take such base courses as to live by my wits.

Overbury has described the "golden Asse"

"as blind as his mother, and swallowes flatterers for friends. . . . Wheresoeuer hee eats, hee hath an officer to warne men not to talke out of his element . . . he cannot exchange a peece of reason, though hee can a peece of gold. Hee is naught pluckt, for his feathers are his beauty, and more then his beauty, they are his discretion, his countenance, his All."

¹ Cf. G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 63. Every Man out of his Humour; Character of the Persons.

² Ibid. p. 75, Act 1, Sc. 1.

The expression "his feathers are . . . his countenance," *i.e.*, the things that lend him protection or patronage, seems rather strained. Perhaps however a reference to Sogliardo (= "golden Asse") and Shift (his flatterer) calling themselves "Countenance and Resolution" is implied.¹ Catch-words of this sort are not infrequent, and would be appreciated by readers who not only frequented the theatres, but took "tables" (*i.e.* pocket-books) to note down any passages that took their fancy.

The "golden Asse" concludes thus :

"He is now at an end, for hee hath had the wolfe of vaine-glory, which he fed vntill himselfe became the food."

Thus Sogliardo too is brought to court, made an ass of (Act v. Sc. 2); finds his "Resolution" has been fooling him (Act v. Sc. 3).

Sogliardo shows many traits of the "Country Gentleman." The latter is a "gull" too, whilst Sogliardo is what Thackeray would call a "pigeon" who is "rooked" by Carlo Buffone and Shift. Thus the "golden Asse" has further features of Sogliardo. We read that :

"A golden Asse Is a young thing, whose Father went to the Deuill; he is followed like a salt bitch, and lymb'd by him that gets vp first; his disposition is cut, and knaues rent him like tenter-hookes: hee is as blind as his mother, and swallows flatterers for friends."

Traits to form the "golden Asse" may have been drawn from Asotus, wealthy though of mean extraction,² whose clothes are worth more than he, who in the form of courtesy is "rooked" by Amorphus,³ who teaches him how to become a "complete Gallant."⁴ That the "golden Asse" should show similarities to two of Ben Jonson's figures is not strange, because that poet frequently presented the same person in a later play under another disguise.

The "Phantastique. An Improudent young Gallant"

¹ Cf. p. 48, and Notes 2, 3. (The allusion to Sogliardo and Shift in the "Flatterer.")

² G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 153. Cynthia's Revels, i. 1.

³ Ibid. p. 155.

⁴ Ibid. Cynthia's Revels, ii. 1; iii. 3.

is a further development of the "golden Asse," but not provided with so much money. This and the "fine Gentleman" have received traits from Anaides in Cynthia's Revels. The "young Gallant"

"hath more places to send money to, than the Diuell hath to send his Spirits: and to furnish each Mistresse, would make him runne beside his wits, if he had any to lose. He accounts bashfulness the wicked'st thing in the world; and therefore studies Impudence."

Anaides is thus described by Mercury¹:

"'Tis Impudence itself, Anaides; one that speaks all that comes in his cheeks, and will blush no more than a sackbut. . . . He is a great proficient in all the illiberal sciences, as cheating, drinking, swaggering, whoring, and such like. . . . One other genuine quality he has which crowns all these, and that is this: to a friend in want, he will not depart with the weight of a soldiered groat, . . . marry, to his cockatrice, or punquetto, half a dozen taffata gowns or satin kirtles in a pair or two of months, why, they are nothing."

The "fine Gentleman" and the "Courtier" have much in common, in so far as both are finished gallants. Like Anaides, the "fine Gentleman"

"has two essential parts of the courtier, pride and ignorance."²
for he is

"iudiciall only in Tailors and Barbers, but his opinion is euer ready and euer idle."

Middleton, whose "Fair Quarrel" was published in 1617, but "acted before the King and divers times publikely by the Prince his Highnes Seruants," may have suggested the commencing lines:

"*A fine Gentleman Is the Cynamon tree, whose barke is more worth then his body.*"

In the "Fair Quarrel" (iii. 2) the passage occurs³:

. "thou cinnamon-tree,
That but thy bark hast nothing good about thee!"

However, in the "character" of the "fine Gentleman"

¹ Ibid. p. 159, ii. 1.

² Ibid. p. 159.

³ Middleton, M. ii. p. 249. Fair Quarrel (by Middleton and Rowley) iii. 2.

one finds the features of one of Shakespeare's creations, Slender. For instance :

"Hee is somewhat like the *Salamander*, and liues in the flame of loue, which paines he expresseth comically : and nothing grieues him so much, as the want of a Poet to make an issue of his loue ; yet he sighes sweetly, and speakes lamentably : for his breath is perfumed, and his words are winde."

The situation is the same as when Slender "had rather than forty shillings (his) Book of Songs and Sonnets here—Ah, sweet Anne Page !"

The original of the "Courtier" is perhaps Fastidious Brisk in Ben Jonson's "Every Man out of his Humour," but of course Overbury had plenty of opportunities to study the vagaries of senseless gallants at a foolish court. Following passages suggest memories of Fastidious :

"He smells ; and putteth away much of his iudgement about the scituation of his clothes.

Fast. "Why, assure you, signior, rich apparel has strange virtues : it makes him that hath it without means, esteemed for an excellent wit : he that enjoys it with means, puts the world in remembrance of his means."¹

Macilente, speaking of Brisk in a later scene,² remarks :

"Faith, ay ; his civet and his casting-glass
Have helpt him to a place amongst the rest." . . .

Further on one reads that the "Courtier"

"is not, if he be out of Court, but fish-like breathes destruction, if out of his owne element."

Fastidious, answering Carlo Buffone's question,³

"Whither were you riding now, signior ?"

"Who, I ? What a silly jest's that ! Whither should I ride but to the court ?"

In the "Character of the Persons"⁴ Fastidious is described as :

"A neat, spruce, affecting courtier, one that wears clothes well, and in fashion : practises by his glass how to salute ; speaks good

¹ G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 94. Every Man out of his Humour, ii. 2.

² Ibid. (iv. 4), p. 116.

³ Ibid. (ii. 1), p. 80.

⁴ Ibid. p. 63.

remnants . . . swears tersely, and with variety; cares not what lady's favour he belies, or great man's familiarity. . . ." ¹

The "Courtier"

"puts more confidence in his words than meaning, and more in his pronuntiation than his words. *Occasion* is his *Cupid*, and hee hath but one receipt of making loue. Hee followes nothing but inconstancie, admires nothing but beauty, honours nothing but fortune. Loues nothing. The sustenance of his discourse is newes, and his censure like a shot depends vpon the charging."

Traits of Hedon,² a later edition of Fastidious Brisk, are also not wanting; for instance

"He [*i.e.* Hedon] is thought a very necessary perfume for the presence, and for that only cause welcome thither: six milliners' shops afford you not the like scent. He courts ladies with how many great horse he hath rid that morning, or how oft he hath done the whole, or half the pommado in a seven-night before: and sometimes ventures so far upon the virtue of his pomander, that he dares tell 'em how many shirts he has sweat at tennis that week. . . ."

The conversation between Hedon and Anaides in the same scene (*Cynthia's Revels*, ii. 2) illustrates the "Courtier's" "one receipt of making loue."

The "Amorist is a "gallant" who is in love to an absurd degree, even in an age accustomed to absurdities. This "character"³ perhaps does not owe its origin to a figure that had appeared on the stage.

If the affectation of the time drove the wealthier young men to turn themselves into effeminate gallants, it caused many poorer ones and disbanded soldiers to become noisy roisterers, then called "Roaring Boys." They strove to render their manners as coarse as the gallants theirs super-refined. In point of wit and courage both classes seem to have stood on fairly equal terms. It is hardly possible to point out any particular seventeenth century

¹ Cf. p. 80, Note 1.

² G-C. i, pp. 157, 158 (*Cynthia's Revels*, ii. 1).

³ A passage may be indebted to Florio's Montaigne, i. 20, ed. Morley, p. 36. The *Amorist* is perhaps '*inamorato Lucian*,' drawn by Marston in *Satire* iii, cf. *Works*, ed. Bullen, Nimmo, 1887, iii. 278.

play, and state that it provided the figure of the "Roaring Boy," as several contained these bullies,¹ and all these "Hectors" have a great family likeness. The stage figure is the same in all plays in which it occurs, and the "character" of the "Roaring Boy"² tallies with it.

As an appendix to the sub-group containing the "proud Man" and the "gallants" one finds two rustic types, the "Country Gentleman" and the "elder Brother." Both were probably written by Overbury himself.³ They may be compared to the "Boor"⁴ of Theophrastus.

The "Country Gentleman" often presented himself at court, where Overbury no doubt enjoyed the spectacle of his becoming "troublesome with the ill managing of his rapier," which caused the imprisoning of the man who obtained the Country Gentleman's "comming into the presence."⁵ But perhaps the author has also borrowed features for this "character" from Gostanzo in Chapman's "All Fools."

"If hee [*i.e.* the Country Gentleman] goes to Court, it is in yellow stockings" [—then out of fashion—] "and if he be in winter, in a sleight taffetie cloke, and pumpes and pantaffles . . . by this time hee hath learned to kisse his hand, and make a leg both together, and the names of Lords and Counsellors; he hath thus much toward entertainment and curtesie, but of the last he makes more vse; for by the recitall of *my Lord*, hee coniures his poore country-men."

Gostanzo (to his son). Fie on thee, clown! They say the
world's grown finer;
But I for my part never saw young men
Worse fashion'd and brought up than now-a-days.
'Sfoot, when myself was young, was not I kept
As far from Court as you? I think I was;

¹ "Roarers" occur in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, Massinger's *City Madam*, Middleton's *Fair Quarrel*, Field's *Amends for Ladies*.

² For a trait borrowed from James' Counterblaste, cf. p. 122 and note 2.

³ Both in ii. 1614.

⁴ Cf. Jebb, p. 117 ff.

⁵ James I. was a notorious coward, and the sight of a rapier much displeased him.

And yet my father on a time invited
 The Duchess of his house ; I being then
 About some five-and-twenty years of age,
 Was thought the *only* man to entertain her ;
 I had my congé [=courteous bow] ; plant myself of one leg,
 Draw back t'other with a deep fetch'd honour ;
 Then with a bel regard advant [=raised] mine eye
 With boldness on her very visnomy [=face]
 I did not, as you barren gallants do,
 Fill my discourses up drinking tobacco ;
 But on the present furnish'd evermore
 With tales and practised speeches ; as sometimes,
 " What is't a clock ? " " What stuff's this petticoat ? " etc.¹

Further, the " Country Gentleman "

"speakes statutes and husbandry well enough, to make his neighbours think him a wise-man ; hee is well skilled in *Arithmetike* or rates ; and hath eloquence enough to saue his two-pence. . . . His trauell is seldome farther then the next market towne, and his inquisition is about the price of corne. . . . Nothing vnder a *Sub-pœna* can draw him to *London*, and when hee is there, hee stickes fast vpon euerie object, casts his eyes away vpon gazing, and becomes the prey of euery cut-purse."

When speaking of his son, Valerio, Gostanzo supposes (and desires) him to be a similar clod to himself :²

Gos. My son, alas !
 I hope to bring him up in other fashion,
 Follows my husbandry, sets early foot
 Into the world ; he comes not at the city,
 Nor knows the city arts
 . . . Acquaints himself with no delight but getting,
 A perfect pattern of sobriety,
 Temperance and husbandry, to all my household. . . .

The " elder Brother " has, perhaps, as its original Master Stephen, the Country Gull, in Ben Jonson's " Every Man in his Humour ; " at any rate several traits are borrowed from Master Stephen. We read that the " elder Brother " " lookes like his land, as heauily, and durtily, as slubbornely. . . . The first thing hee makes knowne is his estate ; and the load-stone that draws him is the vpper end of the table. He wooeth by a

¹ Chapman, M. pp. 62, 63. (All Fools, ii. 1.)

² Ibid. i. 1, p. 44.

particular (*i.e.* an inventory of goods), and his strongest argument is the ioynture.”

Thus we have a conversation between Master Stephen and a serving-man, a complete stranger to him :¹

Servant. Save you, gentlemen !

Step. Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility, friend ; yet you are welcome : and I assure you mine uncle here is a man of a thousand a year, Middlesex land. He has but one son in all the world, I am his next heir, at the common law, Master Stephen, as simple as I stand here, if my cousin die, as there's hope he will : I have a pretty living o' mine own too, beside, hard by here.

Further on it is stated that the “ elder Brother ”

“ speakes no language, but smells of dogs or hawkes.”

Thus, too, Stephen² :

“ Why, you know an a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages now-a-days, I'll not give a rush for him : they are more studied than the Greek, or the Latin.”

Also the “ elder Brother ”

“ loues to be commended, and hee will goe into the kitchen, but heele haue it. He loues glory, but is so lazie as he is content with flatterie.”

Stephen, it will be remembered, chatters of his estate to the strange servant, but we have the following interesting conversation as well³ :

Stephen. . . . How dost thou like my leg, Brainworm ?

Brainworm. A very good leg, Master Stephen ; but the woollen stocking does not commend it so well.

Step. Foh ! the stockings be good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust ; I'll have a pair of silk against winter, that I go to dwell in the town. I think my leg would shew in a silk hose——

Brai. Believe me, Master Stephen, rarely well.

Step. In sadness, I think it would : I have a reasonable good leg.

Brai. You have an excellent good leg, Master Stephen ; but I cannot stay to praise it longer now, and I am very sorry for it. [Exit.

Step. Another time will serve, Brainworm. Gramercy for this.

¹ G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 4. Every Man in his Humour, i. 1.

² Ibid. p. 4.

³ Ibid. p. 8, Act 1, Sc. 2.

Then the "elder Brother"

"iudgeth it no small signe of wisdome to talke much, his tongue therefore goes continually his errand, but neuer speeds."

This reminds one of the dialogue between Stephen and Edward Knowell¹:

E. Know. You speak very well, coz.

Step. Nay, not so neither, you shall pardon me: but I speak to serve my turn.

E. Know. Your turn, coz! do you know what you say? A gentleman of your sort, parts, carriage, and estimation, to talk of your turn in this company, and to me alone, like a tankard-bearer at a conduit!

Because Sogliardo in "Every Man out of his Humour" is a new version of Master Stephen,² we can see resemblances in Sogliardo and the "elder Brother," especially in the passages:

"The first thing hee makes knowne is his estate" . . . "and his ambition flies Iustice-hight."

Compare this with Sogliardo's words:³

"Nay, look you, Carlo; this is my humour now! I have land and money, my friends left me well, and I will be a gentleman, whatsoever it cost me."

And a little further on:

Sog. Why, and for my wealth I might be a justice of peace.

Carlo. Ay, and a constable for your wit.

Sog. All this is my lordship you see here, and those farms you came by.

But in this latter play Sogliardo is more of a "court gull" than a rich bumkin, and it is more probable that Master Stephen's portrait was redrawn in the "elder Brother."

Corresponding to the "Unpleasant Man"⁴ of Theophrastus

¹ Ibid. p. 9.

² "Sogliardo and Fungoso are Master Mathew and Master Stephen thrown into new situations, and marked with more skilful and vivid touches." —Gifford, Ibid. p. 141.

³ Ibid. p. 72. Every Man out of his Humour, i. 1.

⁴ Cf. Jebb, pp. 111, 112.

one finds the "old Man," who ought to have been called the "unpleasant old Man." This "character," which has no redeeming features whatever, and is as disagreeable in behaviour as it is burdened by the miseries of old age,¹ seems to have been written as a caricature of some one for whom the author (Overbury himself?) cherished a great aversion. Possibly (but of course this is mere conjecture), Northampton was the original of the "old Man" (ii. 1614). He was one of Overbury's most inveterate enemies, was grand-uncle to Lady Frances Howard, and seems to have aided her in poisoning Sir Thomas.² The "old Man" is not the only instance in which a person in real life was attacked in a "character."³

At the end of Oldham's Works⁴ a "Character" is appended, apparently that of an old Yorkshire (?) clergyman, who is supposed to have been the father of the author himself. This "Character" is scurrilous, coarse and nasty to the last degree; the old man's real character is neglected, but all his personal disadvantages are hugely overdrawn. Neither it, nor Overbury's "old Man" belongs to the genus of "characters" proper. Both contain nothing but abuse for some person unnamed, not the generalization of a class of men under the influence of some pet vice or predominant virtue. John Earle felt that the "character" of the "old Man" was an unfair portrait of a class of men, and did amends for it in the "Micro-cosmographie," as will be later seen.⁵

¹ The distresses of old age are an ancient theme; Beda himself has described them: "dum oculi caligant, auris graviter audit, capilli fluunt, facies in pallorem mutatur, dentes lapsi numero minuuntur, cutis arescit, flatus insuaviter odorat, pectus suffocatur, tussis cachinnat, genua trepidant, et homo interior, qui non senescit, his omnibus aggravatur."—Beda, iii. 652; quoted from Erdmann: *Otfriids Evangelienbuch*; Halle, 1882, p. 481.

² Cf. pp. 21, 24; p. 25 and note 1; p. 27 and note 6.

³ This happened perhaps in the "very Woman" and "Her next part"; also in the "Intruder into fauour," the "excellent Actor," perhaps also in the "Rimer" and "meere Common Lawyer," if not in the "Fellow(s) of a(n) House."

⁴ The | Works | of | Mr. John Oldham, | Together with his | Remains. | The sixth Edition Corrected. | London. | Printed, etc. 1703.

⁵ Cf. pp. 139, 140.

It will be convenient to treat the "Character of a happy life" here. It was written by H. W. (Henry Wotton), and its authorship is further assured by its insertion among that author's poems in the "*Reliquiae Wottonianae*"¹ where however the sequence of verses three and four is inverted.

This beautiful little poem appeared first in the fourth impression of Overbury's writings. In the fifth it was placed at the end of the new "Characters," and was reprinted in each subsequent edition, but always brought the fresh material to a close.

The "happy life" was very well known and seems to have enjoyed great popularity. Ben Jonson appears to have recited it from memory to William Drummond of Hawthornden, and also, if the copy of the poem among the Allexn papers is in his handwriting, to have written it down from recollection.² Thus, at any rate does Gifford account for certain alterations made in the text, but Jonson's (amended) reading only occurs where the scansion required it.

Not only did Ben Jonson admire it, but the poem was perhaps known to Pope, and suggested to him the theme for his "Solitude."

The "happy life" has been included in two famous collections of poems, namely in Percy's "*Reliques*" (Series 1, Book 3, No. 11), and in Palgrave's "*Golden Treasury*" (No. xciv).

A "character" in verse marks an innovation, but Wotton found imitators in Milton and Wordsworth.³

¹ "*Reliquiae Wottonianae, or a Collection of Lives, Letters, Poems,*" etc., London, 1651, 12o, pp. 522, 523; or "*Reliquiae Wottonianae,*" Third Edition, London, 1672, vol. ii. pp. 383, 384.

² Cf. G-C. (Ben Jonson) iii. pp. 474, 475 and note 5, *ibid.* "Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden (vii.):" "Sir Edward (sic) Wotton's verses of a happie lyfe, he (*i.e.* Ben Jonson) hath by heart."

³ Milton wrote two poems "On the University Carrier" (cf. Morley, C.W., p. 291 ff.) at Cambridge in 1631, and Wordsworth as late as 1806 composed his "Character of the Happy Warrior" (C.W., p. 433 ff.). It may however be doubted that any of these poems forms a real "character," the tone being not general enough. They treat of individuals only, those of Milton dealing with the death of Hobson, renowned for his "choice," whereas the Lake poet eulogized Nelson.

Wotton's "happy life" may have been suggested by Hall's "Character of a Happy Man,"¹ but the similarity of the matter treated in each case, and of the ideas expressed, which are universal in their scope, preclude any possibility of proof that Wotton was indebted to Hall, or even acquainted with his "Character."

¹ Cf. Morley, C.W., pp. 127-129.

ADDENDUM TO CHAPTER III

Diuellish Vsurer (cf. p. 66): The Usurer seems to be a familiar figure in satire based on classical models. R. B. Alden, in his *Rise of Formal Satire in England under Classical Influence*, includes usury among the objects satirized by Hake, Gascoigne, Hall, Marston, T.M. (*Micro-Cynicon*), Rowlands, Wither, R.C. (*Time's Whistle*); also by Lodge (p. 94).

CHAPTER IV

"CHARACTERS" OF WOMEN

THE group of "characters" to be examined next marks a departure from the example of Theophrastus, who had not drawn the "characters" of women, to whom indeed he had made but few and short allusions. Thus here more scope for original work was to be found, although numerous models existed in contemporary plays and elsewhere, on which the "characters" of women could be based.

In this group occur :

- (a) "A good Woman" (ii. 1614), and as her opposite "A very very Woman" and "Her next part" (ii. 1614).
"A good Wife" (v. 1614) as opposite: "Her next part."
"A vertuous Widdow" (vi.b 1615) as opposite: "An ordinarie Widdow" (vi.b 1615).
- (b) "A fayre and happy Milke-mayd" (vi.b 1615) as opposite: "A Chamber-maide" (vi.a 1615).
- (c) "A Whoore" (v. 1614), "A very Whore" (v. 1614), "A Maquerela" (vi.a 1615).

In this arrangement exception can be taken to (b) and (c). The "Milke-mayd" and "Chamber-maide" may, for instance, be regarded as belonging to the next group, to the "types" rather than "characters." But there is a clear antithesis of character shown, the "Milke-mayd" being written to depict an innocent country girl, the reverse of the "Chamber-maide," depraved by her intercourse with "society" and the town. Therefore it is preferable to deal with these two "characters" here, and convenient to include the sub-group (c) as well.

Beginning with the "good Woman," "good Wife," the "vertuous Widdow" and their opposites, we have "characters" before us drawn less perhaps from the Elizabethan drama than from the poem by which Overbury

had become known as an author before his “Characters” appeared, viz. the “Wife.” This poem, which appeared in the first impression, has been regarded by earlier writers on Overbury as a lampoon on the Countess of Essex, to whom however after a careful perusal I have been unable to find a single allusion; indeed it is difficult to see how a poem treating of the good qualities of an ideal wife could be construed into an effective satire directed against a bad woman. Had Overbury desired to attack Lady Francès Howard, he would surely have chosen a more direct method of doing so. But in his “character” of the “very very Woman”¹ certain passages appear to be pointed at Lady Essex: We find:

“She is *Mariageable* and *Fourteene* at once; and after shee doth not liue but tarry.”

When Frances Howard married Robert Devereux, Lord Essex (Jan. 5th, 1606), she was but fourteen years old, and her husband fifteen.² The fact that “*Mariageable*” and “*Fourteene*” are italicised in the text implies that the author quoted them as catch-words. They are borrowed from Henry Porter’s “Two Angry Women of Abington,”³ where “Mall, the wholesome, robust English girl, quick-witted, yet loving and sincere, with a brave openness quite unlike the sophisticated innocence which delighted a later generation in Congreve’s “*Prue*”⁴ soliloquized on her single state thus: ⁵

“Now, by Saint Anne, I will not die a maid!”
 Good faith, before I came to this ripe growth,
 I did accuse the labouring time of sloth;
 Methought the year did run but slow about,
 For I thought each year ten I was without [*i.e.* a husband].
 Being fourteen and toward the tother year,
 Good Lord, thought I, fifteen will ne’er be here!”

¹ Very (=Fr. *vrai*), is used by Overbury often in the sense of bad, common, ordinary. Later contributors to “Overbury’s Characters” prefer “meere” (=regular, thorough).

² Cf. p. 17 (and notes 2, 3).

³ Cf. M. (Nero), p. 93 ff.

⁴ Cf. Introduction to Henry Porter, *ibid.* p. 92.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 118; Two Angry Women of Abington, ii. 1.

Mall later on in the same scene has a quarrel with her mother on the same subject.¹

Mall. Hasty [*i.e.* to marry], mother ! why, how old am I ?

Mistress Barnes. Too young to marry.

Mall. Nay, by the mass, ye lie.

Mother, how old were you when you did marry ?

Mis. Bar. How old soe'er I was, yet you shall tarry.

Now the character of Mall, as has been indicated above, does not at all tally with that of the "very Woman." The author of the "character" quotes Mall purposely; her freshness is to contrast with the reputation of some lady, whose early marriage was the cause of scandal; and, if Overbury were the writer, the "very Woman" might easily possess certain features of his deadliest enemy. It is true that at the time this "character" was written,² Overbury would hardly have dared to make more than covert allusions to Lady Essex, however bitterly he may have resented his own expulsion from liberty. A possible thrust at Lady Essex is contained in the line :

. . . "by too free-giuing, [*she*] leaues no *Gift*."

Overbury was aware that Lady Essex had been very free-giving to Rochester. He plumed himself on the fact that he by his own wit had enabled his patron to win her favour so easily.³ Besides, her adultery was notorious in court circles; Prince Henry shamed her once openly.⁴ An attack may be implied in the following passage :

"Shee commits with her eares for certaine, after that shee may goe for a Maide, but shee hath been lyen with in her vnderstanding."

Frances Howard did "goe for a Maide" after the celebrated divorce court had passed its verdict.⁵ In any case, Overbury's (?) remark, that

¹ Ibid. p. 120.

² It appeared in impression ii., and thus may with some show of probability be ascribed to Overbury himself, especially if the allusions are directed against Lady Essex.

³ Cf. p. 16, and notes 1, 3.

⁴ Cf. Rimbault; Works of Sir Th. Overbury, London, 1890, p. xli.

⁵ Cf. p. 18.

“Hir chiefe commendation is, she brings a man to repentance.”
was verified in Rochester’s case.¹

Returning to the poem, “The Wife,” we find from a contemporary writer² that it was not written as a satire against Lady Frances Howard, but with an entirely different object, namely as a compliment paid to the Countess of Rutland, who was unhappy in her marriage. Overbury possibly hoped to persuade her to obtain a divorce and then to marry him.³

The “character” of the “good Woman” seems to be a summary in prose of “the Wife.” In all nine passages, the bulk of the sketch may be traced back to the poem. The reverse of the traits drawn in the “good Woman” can be found in the two succeeding “characters.” We may ascribe them with probability to Overbury, both on account of the matter treated and their place in the edition. When considering the parallel passages in the “Wife” and the “good Woman,” it must not be forgotten that “character-writing” will condense in a few terse words of prose a thought only expressed by several lines of verse:⁴

- (1) “One, thus made *two*, *marriage* doth re-unite,
And makes them both but one *hermaphrodite*.”⁵
—Wife, ll. 23, 24.

In the “good Woman” we read:

“After his, her chiefest vertue is a good husband. For *Shee*
is Hee.”

¹ Overbury told Rochester that he would ruin his whole career, if he persisted in marrying Lady Frances Howard. Cf. p. 16, note 3.

² From Ben Jonson. Cf. his “Conversations with Drummond of Hawthornden” (xii.). Also p. 14 and note 2.

³ As Overbury’s relations to the Countess of Rutland have been fully discussed in the Biography, cf. pp. 14, 15, 20, it is unnecessary to repeat all details here.

⁴ The reverse is the case in Hall’s “Happy Man” and Wotton’s “happy life.” But Hall’s style is very prolix. Is the “good Woman” the original of the “Wife”?—a rough sketch embodying the chief thoughts for the poem Overbury had in mind to write?

⁵ All quotations from the “Wife” are taken from Rimbault’s Overbury, London, 1890.

- (2) "God to each man a private woman gave,
That in that *center* his *desires* might stint,
That he a *comfort* like himselfe might have,
And that on her *his like* he might imprint."

—Wife, ll. 37-40.

This explains a difficult passage in the "good Woman":

"A Good Woman is a comfort, like a Man."

- (3) "By *good* I would have *holy* understood,
So *God* she cannot love, but also *me*,
The law requires our *words* and *deeds* be good,
Religion even the *thoughts* doth sanctifie:
As she is *more* a *maid* that ravisht is,
Then she which only doth but *wish amisse*.
Lust onely by *religion* is withstood,
Lusts object is alive, his strength within;
Morality resists but in *cold blood*;
Respect of *credit* feareth *shame*, not *sin*."—Wife, 139-148.

Compare this with:

"Hir greatest learning is religion, and her thoughts are on her owne *Sexe*, or on men, without casting the difference."

The following passage is taken from "Her next part":

"Her *Deuotion* is good clothes, they carry her to Church, expresse their stuffe and fashion, and are silent; if shee be more deuout, shee lifts vp a certaine number of eyes, in stead of prayers, and takes the Sermon and measures out a nap by it, iust as long. Shee sends Religion afore to *Sixtie*, where she neuer ouertakes it, or driues it before her againe."

In the "very Woman" we read:

"Her virtue is the hedge of *Modestie*, that keeps a man from clymyng ouer into her faults."

- (4) "Give me next *good*, an *understanding wife*,
By nature *wise*, not *learned* by much art,
Some *knowledge* on her side, will all my life
More scope of conversation impart:
Besides, her inborne vertue fortifie.
They are most firmly good, that best know why.
A *passive understanding* to conceive,
And iudgement to discern, I wish to finde. . . ."

—Wife, 175ff.

In the “good Woman” we find :

“She hath so much knowledge as to loue it, and if shee haue it not at home, she will fetch it ; for this sometimes in a pleasant discontent shee dares chide her *Sexe*, though shee vse it neuer the worse.”

The “very Woman” is thus characterized :

“A *Very very Woman*, is a dow-bakt man, or a Shee ment well towards man, but fell two bowes short *strength and vnderstanding*.”

(5) “A wife that’s good, doth *chaste and more* containe,

For *chaste* is but an *abstinence* from ill. . . .”—Wife, 165, 166.

This thought is expressed twice in the “good Woman” :

“Shee is much within, and frames outward things to her minde, not her minde to them.”

“Shee is indeed most, but not much to description, for shee is direct and one, and hath not the varietie of ill.”

(6) “Woman’s *behaviour* [towards men] is a surer barre

Then is their *no* : that fairely doth *deny*

Without *denying* ; thereby kept they [*i.e.* men] are

Safe ev’n from *hope* ; in part to blame is she,

Which hath *without consent* bin only tride ;

He comes *too neere*, that comes to be *denide*.”

—Wife, 211-216.

This, the most quoted¹ verse of the “Wife,” is reflected again in the “good Woman” :

“*Dishonestie* neuer comes neerer than her eares, and then wonder stops it out, and saues vertue the labour. Shee leaues the neat youth telling his *lushious* tales, and puts backe the *Seruingmans* putting forward with a frowne : yet her kindnesse is free enough to be seene ; for it hath no guilt about it : and her mirth is cleare, that you may looke through it, into vertue, but not beyond.”

Of course we find the opposite in the “very Woman” :

“Shee simpers as if shee had no teeth, but lips, and shee deuides her eyes and keeps halfe for her selfe, and giues th’ other to her neat Youth.”

¹ Cf. the “Lady’s Resolve” by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu :

“Let this great maxim be my Virtue’s guide ;

In part she is to blame that has been tried ;

He comes too near that comes to be denied.”

G-C. (Ben Jonson) iii. 480. Note 6.

And again :

“ Shee may escape from the Seruingman, but not from the chambermaide. Shee commits with her cares for certaine, after that shee may goe for a Maide, but shee hath been lyen with in in her vnderstanding.”

- (7) “ *Beauty* is loves object ; *woman* lust’s to gaine
Love, love desires ; *lust* onely to obtaine.” —Wife, 245, 246.

In the “ good Woman ” two passages can be adduced :

“ Shee hath a content of her owne, and so seekes not a husband, but finds him.”

“ Now shee is giuen fresh and alieue to a husband, and shee doth nothing more than loue him, for shee takes him to that purpose.”

Of the “ very Woman ” it is stated :

“ If shee loue she loues not the man but the beast of him.”

- (8) “ No circumstance doth *beauty* beautifie,
 Like gracefull *fashion*. native *comelinesse*.” —Wife, 247, 248.
 “ But let that *fashion* more to *modesty*
 Tend, then *assurance*. . . .” —Wife, 253, 254.

In the “ good Woman ” :

“ Shee weares good clothes, but neuer better ; for shee finds no degree beyond *Decencie*.”

However, the “ very Woman ”

“ is hid away all but her face, and that’s hang’d about with toyes and deuices, like the signe of a Tauerne to draw *Strangers*.”

(9) Both the “ Wife ” and the “ good Woman ” close with the same thought, though expressed once already in the former case :

“ For when by mariage both in one concurre,

Woman converts to man, not man to her.” —Wife, 281-282.

“ After his, her chieftest vertue is a good husband. For *Shee* is *Hee*.” —good Woman.

On the other hand the “ very Woman ”

“ is *Salomons* cruell creature, and a mans walking consumption : euery caudle shee giues him, is a purge. Hir chiefe commendation is, she brings a man to repentance.

Other instances of similarity between the "good Woman" and the "Wife" may be found, but these will bear out the contention. In fact, as both the "Wife" and "Characters" appeared posthumously, it is difficult to state which was written first. I am inclined to think that the "good Woman" presents an essay from the same notes which were expanded into the "Wife," as the thoughts found in both are similar and the ending of each alike. Possibly Overbury jotted down in the "very very Woman" and "Her next part" the material for a poem, a "Very Wife," which however he never wrote. These three essays thus became the nucleus of a collection of "characters," which he, perhaps in the Tower, increased by the "Wise-man" and "noble Spirit," his ideals of men, and later by his descriptions of fops whom he had seen at Court.

Let us next examine the "good Wife," the first of those "Characters" which could not have been written by Overbury himself. We find it in the (third?) "fift Impression" (1614). In his Edition of Overbury's works Rimbault has prefixed to "The Wife" more than twenty odes,¹ which were probably written in 1615 during the trial of Overbury's murderers, for Weston is mentioned by name in several, and Frances Howard's guilt is often contrasted with the ideal purity of the "Wife." Therefore, as a mark of respect to the poisoned man's memory, the new series begins with the "good Wife," the source of which is Overbury's poem. No special "character," a "bad Wife"² for instance, has been written for purposes of contrast, so we must compare the "good Wife" with Overbury's "very Woman," "Her next part."

A few parallels between the "Wife" and the "good Wife" may be given :

- (1) "We are *two halves* : whiles each from other straires
Both barren are ; *joind*, both their *like* can raise."—Wife, 17, 18.

¹ Undated.

² Later in the series the "vertuous Widdow" is, as we might expect, immediately followed by the "ordinarie Widdow."

"Man did but the *well-being* of this life
From *woman* take ; her *being* she from *man*."—Wife, 25, 26.

Thus the "good Wife"

"is relative in all ; and he without her, but halfe himselfe. Shee is his absent hands, eyes, eares and mouth : his present and absent All. . . ."

- (2) "As *good* and *wise* ; so be she *fit* for me,
That is, to *will*, and *not to will*, the same :
My *wife* is my *adopted selfe*, and she
As me, so what I love, to love must frame."
—Wife, 277-280.

The thought contained in the last three lines quoted is thus rendered in the "good Wife" :

"She frames her nature vnto his howsoever : the *Hiacinth* followes not the Sunne more willingly. Stubbornnes and obstinacie are hearbs that grow not in her garden."

- (3) "Domesticke charge doth best that *sex* befit,
Contiguous businesse ; so to fixe the mind,
That *leisure* space for *fancies* not admit :
Their *leisure* 'tis corrupteth *woman-kind*."—Wife, 187-190.

In the "good Wife" :

"Shee leaues tatling to the gossips of the town and is more seene then heard. Her hous-hold is her charge ; her care to that, makes her seldom *non-resident*. Her pride is but to be cleanly, and her thrift not to be prodigiall. By her discretion she hath children, not wantons ; a Husband without her, is a misery in man's apparell. . . ."

The opposite of this may be read in the (very Woman)
"Her next part" :

"Her lightnesse gets her to swim at top of the Table, where her wry little finger, bewrayes *caruing* : her neighbours at the latter end, know they are welcome, and for that purpose shee quencheth her thirst. Shee trauels to and among, and so becomes a woman of good entertainment, for all the folly in the country, comes in cleane linnen to visit her ; shee breakes to them her grieffe in sugar cakes, and receiues from their mouthes in exchange, many stories that conclude to no purpose. Her eldest Sonne is like her howsoever, and that dispraiseth him best : her vtmost drift, is to turne him foole, which commonly she obtaines at the yeares of

discretion. . . . Her most commendable skill, is to make her husband's fustian beare her veluet. This shee doth many times ouer. . . .”

- (4) “By *good* I would have *holy* understood, etc., cf. sub (3), p. 98.
Give me next *good*, an *understanding wife*,
By nature *wise*, not *learned* by much art.”—Wife, 175-176.

Overbury considered religious feeling and “common-sense” to be the primary requisites in a good “Wife.” Thus :

“To conclude, she is both wise and religious, which makes her all this.”

The next two “characters” of this group are the “vertuous Widdow” and the “ordinarie Widdow,” which seem to have been written by the same unknown author, as they appear side by side in the “sixt Impression” (1615). The former may have been suggested by the title of Overbury's Works, viz. “A Wife Novv *The Widdow* of Sir Thomas Overburie.”¹ It is difficult to identify the “vertuous Widdow” or her opposite with any person found in a contemporary comedy, though Lady Ager in Middleton's “Fair Quarrel”² shows some of her traits. Thus in Act ii. Sc. 1, when her son informs her of the imputation cast on her honour, Lady Ager replies :³

. “O poor goodness !
That only pay'st thyself with thy own works,
For nothing else look towards thee. Tell me, pray,
Which of my loving cares dost thou requite
With this vile thought, which of my prayers or wishes ?
Many thou ow'st me for : this seven year hast thou known me
A widow, only married to my vow ;
That's no small witness of my faith and love
To him that in life was thy honoured father ;
And live I now to know that good mistrusted ? ”

¹ Cf. Titlepage to Second Impression, 1614.

² “A Fair Quarrel. written by Middleton and Rowley, was published in 1617, as it was acted before the King and divers times publikely by the Prince his Highnes Servants.” Cf. Middleton M. ii. p. 198.—As plays were not printed till after they had held the boards some time, there is no reason to suppose this drama was unknown to the “seuerall Authors” who contributed “new and choise Characters.”

³ Ibid. p. 222.

To save her son's life, which she fears will be lost in a duel with the Colonel who cast the slur on her good name, she tries to dissuade Captain Ager from fighting him. The motive we see in her speech (Act iv. Sc. 3)¹:

" See, then, how rash you were and short in wisdom !
 Why, wrong my faith I did, slandered my constancy,
 Belied my truth ; that which few mothers will,
 Or fewer can, I did, out of true fear
 And loving care, only to keep thee here." ²

The reverence due to Lady Ager's character is seen in several places. In fact she is the noblest figure in the whole play, and we may well compare her with :

" *A vertuous Widdow* Is the Palme-tree, that thrives not after the supplanting of her husband. For her Childrens sake she first marries, for she married that she might haue children, and for their sakes she marries no more . . . shee thinkes she hath traueld all the world in one man ; . . . this latter Chastity of Hers is more graue and reuerend, than that ere shee was married ; for in it is neither hope, nor longing, nor feare, nor ielousie. . . . No calamity can now come neere her ; for in suffering the losse of her husband, shee accounts all the rest trifles : she hath laid his dead body in the worthyest monument that can be : She hath buried it in her owne heart. To conclude, she is a Relique, that without any superstition in the world, though she will not be kist, yet may be reuerenc't."

The "ordinarie Widdow," a "character" drawn with much coarseness, was no doubt the Jacobean equivalent of the "gay widows" that figure largely in modern novels. In the comedies of this period we frequently see how widows tricked their creditors and suitors. Possibly the "widow" impersonated by Witgood's discarded mistress in Middleton's "Trick to Catch the Old One" supplied a general outline. She had several suitors attracted by her supposed wealth, and plays them off on each other after reserving the richest for herself. One passage however in the "ordinarie Widdow," viz.,

¹ Ibid. p. 268.

² Other passages to the same effect can be found in Act iii. Sc. 3, p. 252 (ibid.), and Act iv. Sc. 3, p. 267.

“ Her chieftest pride is in the multitude of her Suitors ; and by them shee gaines : for one serues to drawe on another, and with one at last shee shootes out another, as Boies do Pellets in Elderne Gunnes.”

seems to have been suggested by some lines in the “ Alchemist ” :¹

“ Nab, thou shalt tell her this.
She'll be more known, more talked of ; and your widows
Are ne'er of any price till they be famous ;
Their honour is their multitude of suitors : ”

though the simile is borrowed from Marston's *Malcontent* :²
“ he would discharge us as boys do elder-guns, one pellet to strike out another.”

To the group of “ characters ” of women belong the “ Chamber-maide ” (vi.a 1615) and the “ fayre and happy happy Milke-mayd ” (vi.b 1615). This latter is one of the few ideal “ characters ”³ that occur in the later series. It has been much admired (by Izaak Walton⁴ amongst others), and is a marked departure from the gross realism of most character-writers.⁵ Possibly the “ Milke-mayd ” was drawn from a living figure idealized, rather than borrowed from a book ; the best points of imaginary and impossible shepherdesses from the pastorals were noted. But these nymphs never had counterparts in real life—even though Queen Bess and her ladies chose to fancy themselves such—so that they could not afford matter for a book of “ characters.” For a “ character ” traits must be drawn from concrete examples ; and, when the peculiarities of each individual have been eliminated,

¹ G-C. (Ben Jonson) ii. p. 35. *Alchemist*, ii. 1. This passage refers to Dame Pliant, who however can hardly be the original of the “ ordinarie Widdow.”

² Act iv. Sc. 4.

³ The others are : the “ worthy Commander,” “ noble House-keeper,” “ Iudge,” “ vertuous Widdow,” “ excellent Actor,” and “ Franklin.”

⁴ *Compleat Angler*, chap. iv.

⁵ Perhaps the author was Sir H. Wotton, who contributed the (signed) poem “ The Character of a happy life.” Compare the idealistic and poetic tone in each. However I cannot find the “ Milke-mayd ” in the “ Reliquiae.” The male pendant to the “ Milke-mayd ” is the “ Franklin.”

the remaining traits so generalized as to form the "character" of the class. It is on this account that the realistic comedies yield more ample material to the character-writers than could the idealistic drama or fantastic romantic novel.

In this special case, the "happy Milkmaid," we find a portrait of the whole class of innocent peasant girls. That some of their virtues are to be found among the ribbon-bedecked shepherdesses of the pastoral is to be expected. They are the virtues common to the whole sex. Perdita, "the queen of curds and cream," perhaps hovered in the writer's imagination. She, too, needs no trinkets, perfumed gloves,¹ or else to mend her beauty.² But again, Perdita is not a real shepherdess, but a princess unknown to herself or anybody else, and her birth asserts itself in her every act. Our "milkmaid" is the daughter of the soil, still clinging to rural customs and one superstition. If she is not Perdita herself, she is her foster-sister. Her character is chiefly intended to act as a foil to those of cunning and debased womenfolk met with in towns, to the "very Woman," "ordinarie Widdow," and still more to the "Chamber-maide." The last of these represents a class of women possessing a very dubious reputation³ at that time. One need go no further than Overbury's Characters⁴ to see this. Perhaps traits were borrowed

¹ Perfumed gloves were in great demand among city ladies. Allusions are plentiful, cf. Ben Jonson, *Every Man out of his Humour*, ii. 2. (G-C., 1, p. 91); Massinger, M. i. p. 123, *New Way*, i. 3 and M. ii. p. 467, *City Madam*, iv. 2.

² Several similarities will be found in *Winter's Tale*, iv. 3.—Thus Perdita's love of flowers. The reference to the custom of casting flowers on graves (h. 1. and *Hamlet*, iv. 5 and v. 1), is also prominent in the "Milke-mayd." But too much stress must not be laid on this custom being mentioned, as it was in such general use.

³ In Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* (ii. 3), Knowell, soliloquizing on the perversion of children by their parents, says:

"We call them (*i.e.* our children) into fellowship of vice;
Bait 'em with the young chamber-maid, to seal,
And teach 'em all bad ways to buy affliction."

⁴ The "very Woman" . . . "may escape from the Seruingman, but not from the chambermaide."—Also in "Her next part": "Her most necessarie

from Mistress Wagtail in Nathaniel Field's comedy, "A Woman is a Weathercock."¹ She meets us again in Fielding's *Tom Jones* as Mrs. Honour, and in Joseph Andrews as Mrs. Slipslop.

Of the last three "characters" of this group of women little need be said. The "Whoore"² the very "Whore," and the "Maquerela" are but too frequently met with, not only in plays of this period, but in descriptions of London life. It would be more correct to include these three "characters" among the "types."

instruments, are a *waiting Gentlewoman*, and a *chamber-maide* . . . but most often leaues th' other in her chamber window."

Cf. also "A Seruingman": "His inheritance (!) is the chamber-maide, but often purchaseth his Master's daughter." . . .

¹ M. (Nero). In Act ii. Sc. 3, and Act iv. Sc. 2, many points of resemblance may be found. The stage figure was a common one. Abigail in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Scornful Lady" (printed 1616) has many points of resemblance with this "character."

² The "Character of a Whore" occurs in Webster's *White Devil*, iii. 1 (M. p. 46). This play (first printed 1612) contains two passages comparing a whore to a hawk, viz., iv. 1, p. 70, and v. 1, p. 90. But probably the simile was already a hackneyed one.

CHAPTER V

THE TYPES

THE last group to be treated consists of "characters" of men suitable to certain trades or professions, or, it would be perhaps better to say, a description of certain weaknesses or failings often observable in several men exercising the same calling, which, when collected, form a typical instance of the class they would portray rather than the "character" of any individual belonging to it.

These "characters" mark a distinct departure from the Greek model, although in Theophrastus the "Oligarch"¹ forms a connecting link between "types" and "characters." Hall's "Good Magistrate"² also stands in this intermediate position, but Overbury's "Seruingman," "Host," and "Ostler" set the example followed by all the later character-writers.

The origin of these "types" can easily be found. In every country people attribute justly or wrongly peculiar qualities to certain classes of men, because perhaps they may be or were found in certain individuals. Thus in Germany tailors are supposed to be short, thin, and not overburdened with courage.³ Similarly the "Overbury" group of "characterists" found to hand a great store of traditional qualities ascribed to men in professions and trades, and had but to collect these traits into "characters."⁴ We find therefore in this group many time-honoured and ancient puns, which we repeatedly meet with when reading

¹ Cf. Jebb, p. 167 ff.

² Morley, C.W., pp. 123, 124.

³ Cf. "Das tapfere Schneiderlein."

⁴ Cf. Earle's remark in his "character" of the "downe-right Scholler," viz., that: "The time has got a veine of making him (*i.e.* the 'Scholler') ridiculous, and men laugh at him by tradition, and no unluckie absurdity, but is put vpon his profession, and done like a Scholler."—*Mic. (Arber)*, p. 41.

comic scenes in seventeenth century drama. It is not strange that this should be so, because these jokes gave infinite pleasure to the "groundlings," and, in the case of the character-writers helped to swell the circulation of their books. For instance, we are told that the Ostler is a thing that scrubbeth unreasonably his horse, reasonably himself; that the Tailor affects most of all weapons the "long bill,"¹ and his actions are strong in-counters;² that the Tinker is a movable, and his conversation is unreprouvable, for he is ever mending; whilst the Waterman (the "cabby" of those days) has learnt to speak well of himself, for he always names himself "the first man," and that if he be a sculler, he will swear that he is a single man, even though he is married.

Though it perhaps would be unfruitful to try to find the originals³ of all the numerous "characters" belonging to this group, two subdivisions are worthy of examination; namely that in which members of the learned professions are to be found, and the other illustrating the prison life of the day.

In the former occur the "meere Scholer" (vi.a 1615), the "meere Fellow of an House" (vi.a 1615), also the "fellow of a House" (vi.b 1615) and the "Pedant" (ii. 1614). To these may be added the legal "characters," viz., the "Puny Clarke" (vi.b 1615), the "Fantasticke Innes of Court man" (vi.a 1615), and the "meere Common Lawyer."

Pedantry is the key-note of the first four "characters." Only the ridiculous side would be likely to appeal to the general public. Overbury himself may have written the "Pedant," but could not have been the author of the others.

¹ "Taylors then" (i.e. in Adam's days) . . . "durst not strike downe their customers with large billes." Dekker (Grosart, ii. 210): *Guls Horne-booke*.

² Counter=prison.

³ In most cases drawn from direct observation.

As the word "mere"¹ is prefixed to the title of most of these "characters" one should understand that not the class as a whole, but some amusing individuals in it are caricatured. This "mere" was added to the "fellow of a House" already in *Editio Septima*. Earle seems to have taken offence at the "characters" of this subgroup. Like Stephens he overlooked the word "mere" and considered an insult had been offered to his profession.²

A trait common to most of these "characters" is that vanity which lacks sufficient means to follow the fashion thoroughly. This too was discussed by Earle in his "Micro-cosmographie," and will be referred to in a later chapter.

Though the "pedant" was a stock figure³ of the stage from the time of *Holofernes*, the originals from which the "meere Scholer" and the "meere Fellow of an House" (a) were probably drawn may be found in Middleton's "Chaste Maid in Cheapside."⁴ In this case Tim is the "meere Scholer," whom we hear speaking "Latine better then his Mother-tongue" in Act iv. Sc. 1.⁵ His Latin letter⁶ to his parents, who only understand English, also bears out this point. Tim's long-winded arguments in Act iv. Sc. 1⁷ are also noticed, for the "meere Scholer."

"In spite of all *Logicke* . . . dare sweare and maintayne it, that a Cuckolde and a Townsman are *Termini Conuertibles*, though

¹ Mere (L. *merus*; pure, unmixed; O. Fr. *mier*) is here used in the sense of utter, out and out, "regular." Thus the "meere Common Lawyer" unites in himself the absurdities of "Common Lawyers" to such a degree that his personality as man is entirely submerged in his "gentlemanship."

² Cf. pp. 60, 61, 62.

³ "Sir Boniface, an ignorant Schoolmaster" in Heywood's "Wise Woman of Hogsdon" has many resemblances to the "meere Scholer," cf. ii. 2, p. 276 (M.); iii. 1, p. 281 ff.; iv. 4, p. 308 ff.; also in iv. 1, p. 294, where he is made ridiculous by Sencer. The date of the publication of this comedy was 1638; but it was acted before. However it is very doubtful if it appeared before 1616, as only one hackneyed joke found in the *Maquerela* (viz. the infectiousness of the *falling sickness*) occurs in the "Wise Woman" (iv. 2, p. 302).

⁴ Acted at the "Swan" on the Bankside by "the Lady Elizabeth's Servants." (Cf. Middleton, M. i. p. 171.) As Princess Elizabeth married the Elector Frederick of the Palatinate on Feb. 14th, 1613, the play must have been produced before this date.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 229-230.

⁶ *Ibid.* (i. 1), p. 175.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 225, 226, 227.

his Mother's Husband be an Alderman. He was neuer begotten (as it seemes) without much wrangling; for his whole life is spent in *Pro* and *Contra*."

In the same scene¹ we hear from Tim's mother how unkindly her boy took to Latin. In the same way:

"That learning which he (*i.e.* the "meere Scholer") hath, was in Non-age put in backward like a Clister, and 'tis now like Ware mislaid in a Pedlers packe; a ha's it, but knowes not where it is."

One passage however in the "meere Scholer" has been directly borrowed from Ben Jonson. It is as follows:

"His tongue goes alwaies before his wit, like a Gentleman-usher, but somewhat faster."

In the "Poetaster" (iv. 3) Tucca says of Albius (who is impersonating Vulcan)²

"His tongue shall be gentleman-usher to his wit, and still go before it."

If Tim, the Cambridge student, behaves himself in a ridiculous fashion, he is therein ably aided by his tutor, who perhaps suggested the "meere Fellow of an House." However the latter has received one trait from Tim³ himself:

"Hee (*i.e.* the "meere Fellow" [a]) is neuer more troubled, then when hee is to maintaine talke with a Gentle-woman: wherein hee conimits more absurdities, then a Clown in eating of an egge."

This reminds us of Tim's wonderful conversation with the Welshwoman in Act iv. Sc. 1.

Though appearing in the supplement to the sixth impression, the "fellow of a House" is almost identical in its matter with the "meere Fellow of an House." Perhaps both "characters" were accepted by the publisher, Laurence Lisle, and printed in haste lest they should fall into the

¹ Ibid. p. 227.

² G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 242.

³ Fletcher's "Elder Brother" is much indebted to the "meere Scholer," especially in the portrayal of Charles in Act i. Earle found the model for his "Downe-right Scholler" in this comedy.

hands of the "imitating Characterist." The source of each may be Tim's tutor in Middleton's "Chaste Maid in Cheapside," but more probably the author(s) had a special individual in mind.

As in the case of the "Gallants" we find in this group a series; the "Scholer," who may either become a "meere Fellow" or a "Pedant," or perhaps enter the legal profession as a "Fantasticke Innes of Court man," and develop into a "meere Common Lawyer." As an appendage to the lawyers we find their drudge, the "Puny-Clarke," who however has not a university training.

The "Fantasticke Innes of Court man" seems to be much indebted to Ben Jonson's Fungoso,¹ who is

"The son of Sordido, and a student; one that has revelled in his time, and follows the fashion afar off, like a spy. He makes it the whole bent of his endeavours to wring sufficient means from his wretched father, to put him in the courtier's cut; at which he earnestly aims, but so unluckily, that he still lights short a suit."

Thus the "Innes of Court man"

"is distinguished from a Scholler by a paire of silke stockings, and a Beauer Hatte, which makes him contemne a Scholler as much as a scholler doth a school-maister. . . . He is as farre behinde a *Courtier* in his fashion, as a scholler is behind him; and the best grace in his behauior, is to forget his *acquaintance*. He laughs at euery man whose Band sits not well, or that hath not a faire shoo-tye, and he is ashamed to be seene in any man's companie that weares not his clothes well. His very essence he placeth in his outside, and his chieftest prayer is, that his reuenewes may hold out for Taffata cloakes in the summer, and veluet in the winter. . . . You shall neuer see him melancholie, but when hee wants a newe Suite, or feares a Seriant: at which times onely, hee betakes himselfe to *Ploydon*." ²

¹ G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 63; Every Man out of his Humour—Character of the Persons.

² Edmund Plowden (1518-1585), a celebrated lawyer, and author of some important legal works written in barbarous French. The author of the "meere Common Lawyer" refers to this legal jargon as "Baragouin," cf. p. 113, note 2, where a sample is given. Stephens euphemistically terms it "our simple French," cf. p. 61.

The "meere Common Lawyer" is perhaps a caricature of John Stephens. The latter resented the "character" almost as a personal insult, and replied to it in a lengthy "Essay" in verse.¹ The legal jargon interspersed throughout the "Common Lawyer" need scarcely be taken more earnestly than that occurring in the "Prisoner"; the author evidently accumulated all the legal terms he had heard and wrote them down at random, not caring much if they fitted the sense or not. However, he aims a shrewd blow at the barbarous French then prevalent in English Law:

"Hee (*i.e.* the "Common Lawyer") thinkes no language worth knowing but his Barragouin.² Onely that for point he hath bene a long time at warres with *Priscian* for a Northerne Prouince."

The second sub-group consists of the "Prison," "Prisoner," "Sarient," "His Yeoman," and the "Common cruell Iaylour." They are all found in the ninth impression (1616) for the first time and treat of prison life, thus affording valuable side-light on the many allusions to the "Counters" or prisons, with which contemporary comedies teemed. All these "characters" show great similarity of style. In fact, they were either written by Dekker, who in that case was not afraid of repeating himself, or else their author so much admired this playwright as not only to imitate his style, but to borrow passages freely from his books. Dekker, as is well-known, thoroughly enjoyed depicting the "seamy side" of London life. In fact he could hardly restrain himself from introducing this theme into any

¹ The "Reprooffe," cf. pp. 61, 62.

² "Baragouin," a word used by Rabelais to denote a jargon. (Baragwin [low Breton]=bara (bread)+gwin (wine), cf. Hatzfeld and Darmesteter, or Murray's Dict.). Cf. also P. Barbier, *Fils: Ce que le Vocabulaire du Français litt. doit à Rabelais: Revues des Études rabelaisiennes*, iii. fasc. 3, 4. Paris, 1905.

For an instance of this Bar(r)agouin we may quote the title of one of Plowden's books: "Les comentaries, ou les reportes de Edmund de Plowden, un apprentice de la comen ley, de dyvers cases esteantes matters en ley . . . en les temps des raygues les roye Edwarde le size, le roigne Mary, le roi et roigne Phillipp et Mary, et le roigne Elizabeth." (London, 1571; cf. D.N.B., xlv. p. 429.)

play or pamphlet he wrote. For instance, though the scene of the "Honest Whore" is laid in Milan, Dekker leads his reader through both Bedlam (1, H.W. iv. 3, 4; v. 2) and Bridewell (ii. H.W., v. 2). Even in plays written in collaboration with others—with Middleton—it is not difficult to recognize Dekker's hand.¹ Thus in the "Roaring Girl" his contributions are evident at once. This play provided models for the "Saricant" and "His Yeoman," the similarities being too striking to be merely accidental. The "Saricant's"

"walks in terme time are vp Fleete-streete, at the end of tearme vp Holeburne and so to Tyburne."

"His Yeoman Is the Hanger that a sargeant weares by his side."

In the "Roaring Girl" (iii. 3)² we are thus introduced to these worthies :

Sir Davy Dapper. what's thy name, honesty ?

Cur. Sergeant Curtleax I, sir.

Sir Davy. An excellent name for a sergeant, Curtleax.
Thou dwell'st hereby in Holborn, Curtleax ?

Cur. That's my circuit, sir ; I conjure most in that circle.

Sir Davy. And what young toward whelp is this ?

Han. Of the same litter ; his yeoman, sir ; my name's Hanger.

Sir Davy. Yeoman Hanger :

One pair of shears sure cut out both your coats ;
You have two names most dangerous to men's throats ;
You two are villanous loads on gentlemen's backs ;
Dear ware this Hanger and this Curtleax !

Cur. We are as other men are, sir ; I cannot see but he who makes a show of honesty and religion, if his claws can fasten to his liking, he draws blood : all that live in the world are but great fish and little fish, and feed upon one another ; some eat up whole men, a sergeant cares but for the shoulder of a man. They call us knaves and curs ; but many times he that sets us on worries more lambs in one year than we do in seven.

Sir Davy. Spoke like a noble Cerberus ! . . .

Thus the "Saricant"

"if he spy his prey, out he leapes like a freebooter, and ryfles,

¹ Cf. also Dekker's fondness for canting language, Dutch terms, and for parading his knowledge of London life.

² Cf. Middleton, M. ii. p. 64.

or like a bandog worryes. . . . This Rauen picks not out mens eyes as others doe, all his spite is at their shoulders. . . . The citie (is by the custome) to feede him with good meat, as they send dead horses to their hounds, onely to keepe them both in good heart ; for not onely those curs at the doghouse, but these within the walls, are to serue in their places, in their seuerall huntings."

And of the Yeoman we read :

"The eye of this wolfe is as quicke in his heade as a cutpurses in a thong, and as nimble is he at his businesse, as a hangman at an execution. His office is as the dogs to worrie the sheep first, or drue him to the shambles."

The comparison between sergeants and wolves is also found in the "Roaring Girl"¹

Sir Davy. There, boy, there, boy ! away : look to your prey, my true English wolves.

In the same play sergeants are called ravens :²

Trap. Stand, mistress ! do you not smell carrion ?

Moll. Carrion ? no ; yet I spy ravens.

The allusions in the "Roaring Girl" to duck-chasing³ by water-spaniels may have suggested :

"Money is the crust he leapes at ; cry a ducke, a ducke, and he plunges not in so eagerly as at this. The dogs chaps water to fetch nothing else ; he hath his name for the same qualitie, for Sarieant is *Quasi see Argent*, looke you Rogues, here is money."

The origin of the "Sarieant" and the Yeoman is thus described :

Sarieant—The spawne of a decayed shop-keeper begets this fry, out of that dunghill is the Serpents egge hatched."

Yeoman—"This Eele is bred too out of the mud of a Bankrupt."

Moll, the "Roaring Girl" (iii. 1), says :⁴

"no bankrout would give seven score pound for a sergeant's place ; for would you know a catchpoll rightly derived, the corruption of a citizen is the generation of a sergeant."

¹ Ibid. p. 65.

² Ibid. p. 66.

³ Ibid. p. 35 (ii. 2) ; cf. also p. 77 (iv. 2) : "but, sirrah, this water-spaniel dives after no duck but me ; his hope is having me at Brainford, to make me cry 'quack.'"

Duck-chasing was a favourite pastime of the citizens, and is alluded to in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour," i. 1 (G-C. i. p. 4). Also Dekker : Witch of Edmonton, iv. i. (M. p. 450).

⁴ Cf. Middleton, M. ii. p. 44.

A favourite pun on the sergeant's mace (or truncheon) is repeated of course :

"Mace, which is so comfortable to the stomach in all kind of meates, turnes in his (*i.e.* the Sarieant's) hand to mortall poyson."

In the "Roaring Girl" (iii. 3) Sir Davy Dapper tells the Sergeants :¹

"Take no bail ; put mace enough into his caudle. . . ."

More passages showing indebtedness to the "Roaring Girl" might be produced ; however one more must suffice :

(The Yeoman) "will very greedily take a cut with the sword, and suck more Siluer out of the wound then his Surgeon shall."

Thus Mall (to her servant Trapdoor) :²

"Draw, rogue, but strike not : for a broken pate they'll keep their beds, and recover twenty marks damages."

The writers who published under Overbury's name were the first to attribute a "character" to an inanimate thing. Thus we have the "Prison." The example set by the Overbury "characterists" was followed by Earle (*cf.* "Pauls Walke")³ and Lupton "London Bridge."⁴

There were, according to Stowe, the following prisons in London : Newgate, Fleet, the two Counters and Bridewell north of the Thames, and Clink, King's Bench, Marshalsea and the White Lion in Southwark.⁵ The "Prison" does not seem to have been Newgate or the southern ones, but rather one of the Compters or Counters, a prison for debt.⁶ This we see from the following passages.

¹ Ibid. p. 65.

² Ibid. p. 67 (iii. 3).

³ Cf. *Mic. (Arber)*, no. 52. Cf. also 41, A Bowle Alley ; 58, A Prison.

⁴ "London and the Countrey Carbonadoed and Quartred into Seuerall Characters. By D. Lupton, London, 1632. Cf. Halliwell's Reprint : Books of Characters, London, 1857.

⁵ Cf. Stowe's *Survey of London*, ed. H. Morley, Routledge, 1893—Newgate, p. 65 ; Fleet, p. 358 ff ; Bridewell, pp. 362-3, 436 ; Counters or Compters : (1) in the Poultry, p. 258 ; (2) in Wood Street, p. 284. The Southwark prisons, pp. 371-6.

⁶ Both the Fleet Prison and Bridewell are out of the question. The Fleet was remoter than either of the Counters from Bedlam, which is said to be in the neighbourhood. So too was Bridewell ; this place was a house of correction.

- (a) " It should bee Christs Hospitall, for most of your wealthy citizens are good benefactours to it." (*i.e.* they send their debtors thither.)
- (b) " And yet, it is so cursed a peece of land, that the sonne is ashamed to be his fathers heyre in it."
- (c) " It is an infected pest-house all the yeere long: the plague sores of the law and diseases heere wholly rainging. The Surgeons are Attorneys and Pettifoggers, who kill more, then they cure. Lord haue mercy vppon vs may well stand ouer these doores, for debt is a most dangerous and catching citie pestilence."
- (d) . . . " it is the dunghill of the law, vpon which are throwne the ruynes of gentry, and the nasty heapes of voluntary decayed Bankrupts."

The particular " counter " referred to is probably that in Wood Street, not far from London Wall, standing on the east side of the road. We are told :

" Some take this place for the walkes in Moorefields (by reason the mad men¹ are so neere) but the crosses here and there are not alike."

Moorfields began outside London Wall, and the " mad men " were in the hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem, better known as " Bedlam " outside Bishopsgate, near " Bethlehem Cross "; however a fair distance from either " counter."

The other Counter was in the Poultry, almost opposite the site of the present Mansion House. References in contemporary plays to imprisonment for debt in one of these houses are very frequent. In Ben Jonson's " Every Man out of his Humour " the last scene depicts the grim interior of the Counter.²

As the " character " of the " Prison " first appeared in 1616, it throws no light on the vexed question of the date of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. However it contains an interesting reference to this play :

¹ The " mad men " were in " Bedlam " (cf. Stowe's *Survey*, pp. 179, 385, 387, 435). It was near Bethlehem Cross, here referred to. (Cf. Stowe's *Survey*, p. 385 ; also the references to Bedlam in Dekker's *Honest Whore*, Pt. 1. iv. 3, p. 164 (M.), iv. 4, pp. 168, 170 ff.)—Steele, in *Essay* 127 of the " *Tatler*," speaks of the " collegiates of Moorfields."

² G-C. (Ben Jonson) i. p. 137 ff. (v. 7).

" If you aske vnder what Horizon this Climate lyes, the *Bermudas*¹ and it, are both vnder one and the same height. And whereas some suppose that this Iland (like that) is haunted with diuels² it is not so: for those diuels (so talked of and feared) are none else but hoggish Iaylours. Hither you neede not sayle, for it is a ship of it selfe: the masters side is the vpper deck: They in the common Iayle ly vnder hatches and helpe to ballast it. . . . Bonds [are] the Waues, Outlawryes gusts, the Verdicts of Iuries rough Windes, Extents the Rockes that split all in peeces."³

The somewhat hackneyed comparison of a prison with a university occurs here:

" But (not so much to dishonour it) it is an vniuersity of poore Schoollers, in which three Artes are chiefly studied: To pray, to curse, and to write letters."

The same simile occurs in the *Roaring Girl*:⁴

" Bedlam cures not more madmen in a year
Than one of the Counters does; men pay more dear
There for their wit than anywhere: a Counter!
Why, 'tis an university, who not sees?
As scholars there, so here men take degrees,
And follow the same studies all alike.
Scholars learn first logic and rhetoric;
So does a prisoner. . . ."

And so on; a little later Sir Alexander Wengrave advises his friend, " Sir Davy, send your son to Wood Street college." Those who have read Dickens' " Little Dorrit " ⁵ will remember that the prisoners in the Marshalsea were still called " Collegians." The same idea occurs in Massinger's " City Madam " (i. 3), where Hoist says⁶

. . . . " I bless the counter where
You learned this rhetoric. . . ."

¹ Cf. *Tempest*, i. 2.

. . . . the still vex'd Bermoothes, there she's hid;
The mariners all under hatches stow'd.

² Cf. *ibid.* " Hell is empty, And all the devils are here!" Also Act ii. S. 1, lines 1-12; 52; 81. Also iii. 3.

³ *Ibid.* i. 1. ⁴ *Middleton*, M. ii. pp. 62, 63. (iii. 3.)

⁵ Cf. also *Pickwick*; In Chap. xlv. Smangle terms his fellow-prisoners in the Fleet " collegians."

⁶ *Massinger*, M. i. p. 419. This play was written much later than 1616. The idea of the Prison as University seems to have been borrowed from the " *Roaring Girl*," where it is worked out at great length.

The "character" of the "Prisoner" is remarkable for its many puns and conceits, which remind one of Dekker. Thus it is quite in keeping with the other "characters" of this group. I quote a few of these humours :

"A *Prisoner* Is one that hath beene a moneyed man, and is still a very close fellow."

"Whosoeuer is of his acquaintance, let them make much of him, for they shall finde him as fast a friend as any in England."

"His apparell is daubed commonly with statute lace, the suite it selfe of durance and the hose full of long Paynes. He hath many other lasting suites, which he himselfe is neuer able to weare out, for they weare out him."

A passage in this "character" shows much general similarity with one in the *Guls Horne-booke*. The former is as follows :

"He was borne at the fall of Babell, the confusion of languages is onely in his mouth. All the vacations he speakes as good English, as any man in England. But in tearme times he breakes out of that hopping one-leg'd pace into a racking trot of Issues, Billes, Replications, Reioynders, Demurs, Querels, Sub-penas, &c. able to fright a simple country fellow, and make him beleue he coniures."

In the *Guls Horne-booke* (Grosart : Dekker, ii. p. 245) one reads :

"There is another Ordinary, to which your London Vsurer, your stale Batchilor and your thrifty Attorney do resort : the price is three pence . . . if they chaunce to discourse, it is of nothing but of *Statutes, Bonds, Recognizances, Fines, Recoueries, Audits, Rents, Subsidies, Surties, Inclosures, Liueries, Indilements, Outlaries, Feoffments, Judgments, Commissions, Bankerouts, Amercements* and of such horrible matter, that when a Lifetenant dines . . . in the next roome, he thinkes verily the men are coniuring."

The abominable prison system of the day preserved most of its abuses until fairly recently, as can be read in the works of Fielding (in "*Amelia*" or "*Jonathan Wild*" and Dickens (in "*Pickwick*," "*Little Dorrit*" or "*Great Expectations*"). The most virulent attack on this system one finds in the "character" of a "*Common cruell Iaylour*," which ends the series now under consideration. No doubt

the essays forming this sub-group were suggested by the hardships and tortures Overbury had undergone in the Tower, which were the talk of the town in 1615 and 1616. Helwys and Weston were execrated, as was the system under which they flourished. All the old scandals about prison mismanagement were rankling in men's minds. The writers of that day—Dekker among them—were for the greater part unfortunates who had lived (or rather starved) on prison fare in the one Counter or other already, and who now saw their chance of revenge.

Throughout the whole "character" no pun enlivens the "Iaylour." The tone of the piece is bitter in the extreme, and the author deeply in earnest. Yet he does not seem to have exaggerated; the reason for the establishment of the "Wood Street College" was probably not forgotten. In his "Survey" Stowe¹ writes of

"one prison-house pertaining to the sheriffs of London, called the compter in Bread Street; but in the year 1555 the prisoners were removed from thence to one other new compter in Wood Street, provided by the city's purchase, and built for that purpose. The cause of which remove was this: Richard Husband, pasteler, keeper of this compter in Bread Street, being a wilful and head-strong man, dealt, for his own advantage, hard with the prisoners under his charge, having also servants such as himself liked best for their bad usage, and would not for any complaint be reformed; whereupon, in the year 1550, Sir Rowland Hill being mayor, by the assent of a court of aldermen, he was sent to the gaol of Newgate, for the cruel handling of his prisoners; and it was commanded to the keeper to set those irons on his legs which are called the widow's alms. These he ware from Thursday to Sunday in the afternoon, and being by a court of aldermen released on the Tuesday, was bound in a hundred marks to observe from thenceforth an act made by the Common Council, for the ordering of prisoners in the compters. All which notwithstanding, he continued as afore, whereof myself am partly a witness; for being of a jury to inquire against a sessions of gaol delivery, in the year 1552, we found the prisoners hardly dealt withal, for their achates and otherwise. . . . For the which enormities, and other not needful to be recited, he was indicted at that session, but did rub it out, and could not be reformed till this remove of prisoners, for the house

¹ Ibid. ed. Morley, Routledge, 1893, pp. 327, 328.

in Bread Street was his own by lease, or otherwise, so that he could not be put from it. Note, that gaolers buying their offices will deal hardly with pitiful prisoners."

But gaolers still bought their offices and hired rooms out :

" A chamber of lowsie beds is better worth to him, then the best acre of corne-land in England."

And things were very much the same in Fielding's, Goldsmith's, and even Dickens' days, if we may trust these writers.

Other " characters " or " types " worthy of mention are the " Waterman " (vi.b 1615), (indebted perhaps to the " Guls Horne-booke," or, with greater probability to the " Chaste Maid in Cheapside " (iv. 3)¹ for its source), and the " Purueiour of Tobacco." The latter was only printed once, in vi.b 1615, and is ignored in all subsequent editions and reprints of the " Characters."

It hardly deserved this fate, and perhaps it will not be amiss to reproduce it here.

A *Purueiour of Tobacco.*

Call him a Broker of Tobacco, he scornes the title, hee had rather be tearmed a cogging Merchant. Sir *John Falstaffe* robb'd with a bottle of Sacke ; so doth hee take mens purses, with a wicked roule of Tobacco, at his Girdle. Hee takes no long time to vndoe any man hee hath to deale with, he doth it in halfe a yeare, aswell as twenty ; and then brags he has nipt them by the members. Hee causes his wife to sit in his Ware-house, to no other purpose, then (as a Countrey Poticary hangs vp an *Aligarta* in his shop) that while his Customers are gaping at her, hee may cosen them of their waight. Hee does not loue God, because God loues plaine dealing ; and tis a question, whether he loues the King, because the King loues no Tobacco. Many trades hath he filcht through ; but this making of Fire-workes, brings most commodity : For hee sels his Tobacco with this condition, that they that buy it, shall bee vndone by it. Such fellows that haue tane so many by the nose, should hang vp for their signe *Diues* smoaking in hell,

¹ Cf. Middleton, M. ii. p. 235, ff.

and the word vnder it: Euery man for himselfe, and the Diuell for them all.

The inspiration for this attack on the "pleasant weed" was probably obtained from James' "Counterblaste to Tobacco" (imprinted by R. B., London, 1604) from which two¹ passages are quoted:

- (a) . . . "is it not the greatest sinne of all, that you the people of all sortes of this Kingdome, who are created and ordeined by God to bestowe both your persons and goods for the maintenance both of the honour and safetie of your King and Commonwealth, should disable your selves in both?"
- (b) "But by the contrary, if a man smoke himselfe to death with it (and many have done) O then some other disease must beare the blame for that fault."

The last quotation has also suggested a passage in the "Roaring Boy" (vi.b 1615) which runs as follows:

"He commonly dyes like *Anacreon*, with a grape in's throate; or *Hercules*, with fire in's marrow. And I haue heard of some (that haue scap't hanging) begged for *Anatomies*; onely to deterre men from taking *Tobacco*."

Thus in the "Counterblaste"² we are told:

"Surely Smoke becomes a kitchin far better then a Dining chamber, and yet it makes a kitchin also oftentimes in the inward parts of men, soiling and infecting them, with an unctuous and oily kinde of Soote, as hath bene found in some great *Tobacco* takers, that after their death were opened."

Why was the "Purueiour of Tobacco" suppressed? It must have enjoyed the King's approbation. Perhaps the simplest solution is, that by the sentiments of devotion it professed for James (whose popularity had been demolished already by his extravagance, his "Kingcraft," and above all by the recent Court exposures), it jarred on the feelings of most Englishmen. It is questionable if

¹ Cf. "A Royal Rhetorician": A Treatise on Scottis Poesie, A Counterblaste to Tobacco, etc. By King James VI. and I. Ed. Rait, London 1900 (Constable & Co.). (a) p. 50. (b) p. 45.

² Ibid. p. 52.

they loved the King “ because the King loues no Tobacco ; ” but very probable that they loved tobacco ¹ much more than they loved their foolish monarch.

¹ “ Taylor, the water-poet, leaves it open to doubt whether the devil introduced tobacco in the first coach or not ; but the habit grew all the same, until, in 1614, there were 7000 vendors of Virginia and Trinidado in London. The smoking went on in shops, theatres, and even churches.”—Goadby, *England of Shakespeare* (Cassell), p. 85.

CHAPTER VI

OVERBURY'S CHARACTERS. GENERAL REMARKS

SEVERAL works, which were popular enough in the earlier years of the seventeenth century, do not appeal to the modern taste on account of the crabbedness of their diction and their artificiality.

Overbury's contemporaries admired the "Characters," because they were "conceited." But the over-elaborated witticisms evident in these sketches frequently rendered the language less lucid. So many passages thus rendered obscure by "conceits" have been quoted from Overbury's Characters already in former chapters, that it will not be necessary to dwell longer on this point.

Though the "Characters" issued under Overbury's name were contributed by many pens, their style is wonderfully uniform. It betrays from time to time lesser differences, as is only natural. Even in works written by one and the same author style varies to a certain extent. In fact, not even in "characters" where we find some peculiar mannerism wanting in others have we always sufficient ground for supposing that they were written by the same man.¹

As in the case of the "Characters" it is very doubtful whether Overbury really was the author of many of the works fathered on him;² his signed prose-writings are but

¹ The similarity in style may be due to imitation, or to some prevailing tendency in writing due to the taste of the period. This is the case when certain "characters" exhibit more conceits than others.

² This holds good of the "Observations upon the xvii. Provinces as they stood A.D. 1609." (Rimbault: Overbury's Works, London, 1890, p. 221ff.) and of the "Crumms fal'n from King James's Table." (Ibid. p. 253 ff.) The authorship of the latter is very dubious indeed. As Rimbault (p. xxiii.) states: "The Crumms fal'n from King James's Table" is printed from the Harleian MS. No. 7582, fol. 42, where it purports to have been copied from the original, in Sir Thomas Overbury's own handwriting. It has appeared

two in number, namely, "Newes from Court" and "Countrey Newes."¹ To these may be added "some" of the "Characters" in the second impression. Thus the small amount of authentic matter renders it difficult to state exactly what are the peculiarities of Overbury's style, but they appear to be :

(1) Great skill in "apophthegm, in which every sentence is a point or witticism."² This is often seen :³

"That every man a little beyond himselfe, is a foole."—

—*Newes from Court.*

"That there is most [newes] heere, for it gathers in going. That reputation is measured by the acre."—*Countrey Newes.*

"*A Flatterer Is the shadow of a foole.*"

An Amorist "is translated out of a man into folly."

"*An affected Traueller Is a speaking fashion.*"

(2) An exaggerated terseness of phrase, which often causes obscurity of meaning. This is most evident in the earliest "characters," and hardly reoccurs in such as appeared in later impressions.⁴ For instance :

in print, but from a different MS., in "The Prince's Cabala, or Mysteries of State. Written by King James the First, and some Noblemen in his Reign, and Queen Elizabeth's," etc., 12mo, 1715." In one case "The Crumms" are copied from a MS. in Overbury's own handwriting, in the other "The Prince's Cabala" (=The Crumms) are attributed to "James and some Noblemen."

¹ Cf. Rimbault : Overbury's Works sub "Newes from Any Whence," pp. 171, 172 ; 174, 175. Most of the short essays are initialled ; other contributors to the Newes being I. D., A. S., W. S.

² Cf. Hallam : Introd. to the Lit. of Europe, 1843, iii. p. 153.

³ This is apparent not only in the "characters" appearing in the second impression of the *Wife*, but to a lesser degree in those added later. A few instances will serve to illustrate this :

"A younger brother best becomes armes, an elder, the thanks for them."
—*Souldier* (v. 1614).

"*A Puritane Is a diseases'd peece of Apocripha.*—(v. 1614.)

"*A Meere Scholler is an intelligible Asse.*"—(vi.a, 1615.) His ill lucke is not so much in being a foole, as in being put to such paines to expresse it to the world.—(Ibid.)

An ordinarie Widdow Is like the Heralds Hearse-cloath ; shee serues to many funeralls, with a very little altering the colour."—(vi.b, 1615.)

⁴ Perhaps Overbury's (posthumous) contributions to the second impression existed in the rough draft only, and would not have been printed in their present condition had their author lived. To obtain clearness of meaning the phrases need expansion. It seems as though a final revision for the press were lacking.

"A Good Woman is a comfort like a man." . . . "After his, her chiefest vertue is a good husband. For *Shee* is *Hee*.

"A golden Asse Is a young thing, whose Father went to the Deuill" (because he sold his soul for money?).

The *Wise-man's* "comparisons intend not to excuse, but to prouoke him higher."

(3) Occasionally a too free use of pronouns is made. This is probably due to haste in writing and the want of opportunity of putting the finishing touch to the sketch. Here is an instance from the "*Seruingman*":

"He is commonly proud of his Masters horses, or his Christmas; hee sleepes when he is sleepe, is of his religion, onely the clocke of his stomacke is set to goe an hower after his."

Even in the second impression itself, style alone does not furnish sufficient evidence for us to discriminate between "characters" written by Overbury himself, and those contributed by "other learned Gentlemen his friends."¹

The sketches drawn of good men and women are always serious in their tone; their English is usually simple and straightforward. This is the case in the "*Iudge*," "*Franklin*,"² "*Milke-mayd*," etc. Humour may often be found in the "types," but usually satire is everywhere predominant in the "characters." The wit is often very thin and forced. Occasionally outbursts of fierce invective are met with, for instance in the "*Iaylour*."

Puns do not occur at first,³ but become more frequent in such "characters" as first appear in later impressions,⁴ especially in those belonging to the ninth edition.

Occasionally Euphuisms are introduced; no doubt purposely in the "fine Gentleman," whom nothing:

¹ In later impressions too the authorship of four "characters" only is known. The "happy life" was written by Wotton (cf. p. 92), and John Cocke claimed the "Tinker," "Apparatour" and the "Almanacke-maker" (cf. p. 61) as his own.

² The allusions to customs now obsolete render the text difficult at times.

³ Except in the "Host." Perhaps this "character" was not written by Overbury?

⁴ Cf. puns quoted from the "Taylor," etc., p. 109, and from the Prisoner, p. 119.

"grieues . . . so much, as the want of a Poet to make an issue in his loue; yet he sighes sweetly, and speaks lamentably: for his breath is perfumed, and his wordes are winde."

Another Euphuism may be found in the "Intruder into fauour" beginning "Hee is *Mountaines Monkie*," etc. (cf. Ante. p. 45, note 2).

One of the later contributors to "Overbury's Characters" seems to have plumed himself on his knowledge of legal lore. Perhaps he, the author of the "meere Common Lawyer" contributed also the "Puny-Clarke," the "Innes of Court man," the "Apparatour," the "Roaring Boy" and the "Maquerela," as in all these, besides the references to legal institutions, there is a desire to display quaint learning, and a tendency to dwell on the obscene. The interpolation in the "excellent Actor" may also have come from his pen.¹ Otherwise the "characters" refrain from coarseness to a greater degree than might be expected in a book written to suit the popular taste of those days.²

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS II—V

Before passing to a review of the influence exerted over later English writers by Overbury and "other learned Gentlemen his friends" it will be opportune to summarize shortly the sources from which these "characterists" have borrowed material for their sketches.

From *Theophrastus*³ they obtained the idea and the plan *Theophrastus* of "characters." Otherwise their indebtedness to him is slight (38-40).⁴ Theophrastus exercised much greater

¹ Stephens and John Cocke in the second impression of the "Essayes and Characters" (1615), both referring to the author of the "Actor" suppose him to have written the "meere Common Lawyer." Cf. p. 60 and notes 3, 4.

² Morley in his "Character Writings of the Seventeenth Century" has suppressed three "characters" only, and excised but few passages in the others.

³ In Casaubon's (Latin) translation, cf. p. 31.

⁴ The numbers in the brackets refer to those pages dealing of the matter summarized here.

influence over Ben Jonson, as is seen in "Every Man out of his Humour," "Cynthia's Revels" and "The New Inn" (34, also note 4; 33, 34). Hall's "Characterisms" betray several borrowings from the Greek writer (34-38). A passage from Theophrastus' "Penurious Man" seems to have found its way into the description of the "Covetous man" through the medium of Hall's "character" of the same name (67).

Hall. The serious sketches found among "Overbury's Characters" often appear to be indebted to *Hall's* "Characterisms." The "proud Man" exhibits features found in (Hall's) "Vainglorious" (78-80). Traits from the "Covetous" reoccur in the "Diuellish Vsurer" (66-67), whilst other qualities distinguishing Hall's "Wise Man," "True Friend," and "Valiant Man" are also owned by the "Wise-man" and "noble Spirit" (51-52).

Nashe. Nashe's "*Pierce Penilesse His Supplication To The Divell*" has in its "defence of Playes" supplied matter to the author of the "excellent Actor" (57-59), and the description of the "vpstart" and "counterfeit polititian" may be considered as the first outline of the "affected Traueller" (74).

Overbury. Overbury's own poem, "*The Wife*," seems to have suggested the "good Woman" (94-95; 97-101) and the "good Wife" (101-103). The reverse of these "characters" is found in "A very very Woman" and "Her next part."

James I. We may ascribe to James' "*Counterblaste to Tobacco*" those passages, which in the "Roaring Boy" and in the "Purueiour of Tobacco" (122) refer to the deadly (?) properties of tobacco.

Attacks on private persons. "Most "types" have been drawn "from the life;" some "characters" perhaps contain attacks on private persons. Thus certain passages in the "Intruder into fauour" may be aimed at Carr (45, note 2; 49); others in the "old Man" and the "very Woman" and "Her next part" at Northampton (? 91) and Lady Frances Howard (95, 96, 97) respectively. Stephens objected to his portraiture as the "meere Common Lawyer" (113),

and after having burst forth into rhyme perhaps became the original of the "Rimer" (59; 61, 62).

Sir Thomas More and his work, the "*Utopia*," furnished material for the "Iudge" (54-56). Homage was paid to Burbage in the "excellent Actor" (56-57).

More.
Burbage.

It is to the contemporary drama that we must turn if we desire to find the main source of inspiration for the "Characters." The actual amount of borrowing from *Shakespeare*¹ is not great. Perdita in humble life is reproduced in the Milke-mayd (105-106); Slender has yielded a trait to the "fine Gentleman" (85). The "Prison" contains, as we have seen (117-118), a reference to the Tempest; the affected Traueller too, may be indebted to a certain extent to Rosalind's and to the Bastard's description of "Italionate Englishmen" (75-76).

Shakespeare.

If Shakespeare's influence on the "Overbury Characterists" was not very marked, that of *Ben Jonson* was enormous, and is most clearly seen in the earliest "characters." Thus in the comedy "*Every Man out of his Humour*" six of the *Dramatis Personae* appear again, thus

Ben Jonson.

Shift as the "Flatterer" (47-48).

Macilente as the "Distaster of the Time" (49-50).

Sordido as the "Ingressor of Corne" (64-65).

Sogliardo as the "golden Asse" (82-83).²

Fastidious Brisk as the "Courtier" (85-86).³

Fungoso as the "Innes of Court man" (112).

"*Cynthia's Revels*" in the person of Anaides provides the figure for the "improuident young Gallant" (83-84), and in Asotus and Hedon, similar natures to Sogliardo and Fastidious Brisk, further features of the "golden Asse" and the "Courtier" may be seen.

¹ The realistic comedies were more adapted to the requirements of character-writers.

² Asotus in "*Cynthia's Revels*" yields further traits to the "golden Asse" (83), whilst Sogliardo possesses certain peculiarities of the "elder Brother" (90 and note 2).

³ The "Courtier" has certain features of Hedon ("*Cynthia's Revels*"), who, like Fastidious Brisk, is a courtier (86).

Master Stephen in "*Every Man in his Humour*" (88-90) is the prototype of the "elder Brother."¹

The "precise characters" seem to have been partly modelled on Rabbi Busy in "*Bartholomew Fair*," and partly on Tribulation Wholesome and Ananias in the "*Alchemist*." (71-73).

The absurd figure of the Traveller (outlined by Nashe already, and the subject of two descriptions by Shakespeare) played a prominent part in three of Ben Jonson's comedies, as Puntarvolo in "*Every Man out of his Humour*," as Amorphus in "*Cynthia's Revels*," and as Sir Politick Would-be in the "*Fox*" (77-78). Of these stage personages Sir Politick may be considered a further development of Amorphus, as the latter is of Puntarvolo. All have yielded traits to the "affected Traueller."

Middleton
and Dekker.

In those "characters" which appeared in editions later than the second the influence of Jonson is less noticeable than that of *Middleton* and *Dekker*.

Middleton's comedy, "*A Trick to Catch the Old One*," may in *Lucre* and the *Creditors* have supplied the outlines to the "characters" of the "*Couetous man*" (66) and the "*Creditour*" (67-69); perhaps the "*vertuous Widdow*" (103-104) is the reflection of *Lady Ager* (*Fair Quarrel*). Tim and his tutor in Middleton's "*Chaste Maid in Cheapside*" seem to have suggested the "*meere Scholer*" and "*meere Fellow of an House*" (110-112).

The figures of the "*Sarieant*" and of "*His Yeoman*" would appear to be derived from Middleton and Dekker's joint production, the "*Roaring Girl*" (114-116). The comparison of a prison to "*an vniuersity of poore Schoollers*" was probably drawn from the same play (118).

Chapman.

Gostanzo in Chapman's "*All Fools*" perhaps supplied certain features of the "*Country Gentleman*" (87-88).

Catchwords and phrases borrowed from various plays

¹ Who has also received traits from *Sogliardo* (cf. p. 129, note 2; p. 90, and note 2).

are frequently met with.¹ They usually supply single thoughts only, and in their originals are often found in a context greatly differing from that in which they occur in the "character." Sometimes, by means of these quoted phrases light may be thrown on the date of the appearance of a play first published some years afterwards.² Thus Webster's "*Duchess of Malfi*"³ was first printed in 1623, but acted earlier, some authorities stating 1612, whilst others, Symonds for instance, suggest 1616. I quote six passages borrowed from this tragedy which are to be found in "characters" first issued in vi.b 1615, and a doubtful one in the "good Woman" (ii. 1614):

Duchess of Malfi.

- (1) *Ferd.* What do you think,
then, pray?

Bos. That you are
Your own chronicle too
much, and grossly
Flatter yourself.

—iii. 1, p. 174

- (2) Now it seems thy great-
ness was only outward;
For thou fall'st faster of
thyself than calamity
Can drue thee.

—v. 5, p. 238.

- (3) He never pays debts un-
less they be shrewd
turns,

And those he will confess
that he doth owe.

i. 1, p. 139

- (4) *Ferd.* He's no soldier.
Delio. He has worn gun-
powder in 's hollow

Characters.

If euer hee doe good deed
(which is very seldome) his owne
mouth is the *Chronicle* of it,
least it should die forgotten.—
Intruder into fauour, vi.b 1615.

yet all this gay glitter shewes on
him, as if the Sunne shone in a
puddle; for he is a small wine,
that will not last: and when
hee is falling, hee goes of him-
selfe faster than misery can
drue him.—*Ibid.*

Debts hee owes none, but
shrewd turnes, and those hee
paies ere hee be sued.—*Ibid.*

Souldier he is none, for hee
cannot distinguish 'twene
Onion seede and *Gunpowder*:

¹ Instances have been given on pp. 84, 105, 111.

² Cf. Note 2, p. 103, and note 4, p. 110.

³ Cf. Webster and Tourneur, *Mermaid Ser.*, London and New York, 1893.

tooth for the tooth-
ache.—iii. 3, p. 187.

- (5) In such a deformed silence
witches whisper their
charms.—iii. 3, p. 188.

- (6) He that can compass me,
and know my drifts,
May say he hath put a
girdle 'bout the world,
And sounded all her
quicksands.

iii. 1, p. 174.

- (7) What cannot a neat knave
with a smooth tale
Make a woman believe?
—i. 1, p. 145.

if he haue worne it in his hollow
tooth for the Tooth-ach, and
so come to the knowlege of it,
that's all.—Roaring Boy, vi.b,
1615.

. . . if hee be found out, and
pay it [*i.e.* the subsidy levied],
he grumbles Treason; but 'tis
in such a deformed silence, as
Witches rayse their Spirits in.
—Diuellish Vsurer, vi.b 1615.

The *Adamant* [loadstone,
compass] serues not for all
Seas, but his doth; for he hath,
as it were, put a gird about the
whole world, and founded all
her *quick-sandes*.

—Housekeeper, vi.b, 1615.

Shee leaues the neath *youth*¹
telling his *lushious* tales. . . .
good Woman, ii. 1614.

These extracts serve to demonstrate that the “Duchess of Malfi” was certainly much quoted in 1615 before the sixth impression of the “Characters” appeared; and if we accept the last passage cited, must have been known to Overbury early in 1613.

¹ This impression “neat youth,” also occurs in the next “character,” the “very very Woman.”

CHAPTER VII

OVERBURY AND EARLE

THE success of Overbury's Characters at once elicited a host of imitators, the chief of whom was John Earle,¹ who is usually considered the greatest of the English character-writers. His language is certainly clearer than Overbury's, but perhaps he lags after the latter as far as originality goes, or rather a real knowledge of certain kinds of men whom both writers have portrayed.

Earle, as will be seen, received the stimulus to write his "Micro-cosmographie," which first appeared in 1628, probably from the great but evanescent popularity enjoyed by Overbury's book.² Many of the "characters" contained in the "Micro-cosmographie" had already been in existence some time, and therefore must have been written whilst Earle was still a very young man. Edward Blount, who published them, states in the Printer's Preface :³

"I Haue (for once) aduentur'd to playe the Mid-wifes part, helping to bring forth these Infants into the World, which the

¹ John Earle, born at York in 1601 (circa). Matriculated at Oxford 1619, obtained his M.A. degree in 1624. Fellow of Merton 1631. Chaplain to the Earl of Pembroke (then Chancellor of the University); 1639, Earle obtained the living of Bishopston in Wiltshire; 1641, chaplain to Charles I. and tutor to Prince Charles; wrote *Eikon Basilike* in 1649; 1660, Dean of Westminster; 1662, Bishop of Worcester; 1663, of Salisbury. Died, 1665.

² Before the appearance of the "Micro-cosmographie" the older collection of "characters" had already twelve times passed the press. Since none of the "imitating characterists" had enjoyed any such popularity, one may conclude that Earle received the incentive to write his book from Overbury.

³ All passages quoted from Earle are taken from the *Micro-cosmographie*, Arber's English Reprints, London, 1868. Other useful editions are:

Microcosmography; a Reprint of Dr. Bliss's Edition of 1811 by Irwin, Bristol and London. (N.D.)

Microcosmographie . . . by John Earle, Dent's Temple Classics, 1899.

Earle's *Microcosmography* is also included in Morley's "Character Writings of the Seventeenth Century," Routledge, 1891.

Father would haue smothered : who hauing left them lapt vp in loose Sheets, as soon as his Fancy was deliuered of them ; written especially for his priuate Recreation, to passe away the time in the Country, and by the forcible request of Friends drawne from him ; Yet passing seuerally from hand to hand in written Copies, grew at length to be a pretty number in a little Volume : and among so many sundry dispersed Transcripts, some very imperfect and surreptitious had like to haue past the Presse, if the Author had had not vsed speedy meanes of preuention : When, perceiuing the hazard hee ran to be wrong'd, was vnwillingly willing to let them passe as now they appeare to the World. . .”

Though in his modesty Earle at first believed his sketches scarcely worthy of publication, the “ *Micro-cosmographie* ” quickly outrivalled the popularity of Overbury’s book.

If Earle received the incentive to write “ characters ” from the earlier collection, passages in the “ *Micro-cosmographie* ” ought to betray a close acquaintance with it. This in the following we shall see to be the case.

In Overbury’s Characters university students and their tutors had been mercilessly ridiculed. The young author would scarcely have been human, if he had not resented such an attack on his “ caste.” That he did so is evident in (Earle’s) “ *downe-right Scholler* ”¹ in which piece references to many of Overbury’s Characters may be found. Here we read that :

“ *A downe-right Scholler* Is one that has much learning in the Ore, vnwrought and vntryde, which time and experience fashions and refines. He is good mettall in the inside, though rough and vnscour’d without, and therefore hated of the Courtier, that is quite contrairie.”

And a little further on :

“ Hee has not put on the quaint Garbe of the Age, which is now become a mans Total.”

The “ Courtier ” referred to is the “ character ” of that name in Overbury’s collection, or perhaps the luckless Sir Thomas himself, under whose name, as we know, lesser

¹ Mic. (Arber), pp. 40, 41.

men ridiculed the Universities. Thus Overbury's "fine Gentleman"

"Is the *Cynamon-tree*, whose barke is more worth then his body." who, as we later read

"is iudiciall only in Tailors and Barbers, but his opinion is euer ready and euer idle."

The same idea is expressed thus in the "Courtier," who

"To all mens thinking is a man, and to most men the finest: all things else are defined by the vnderstanding, but this by the senses; but his surest marke is, that hee is to bee found onely about Princes. Hee smells; and putteth away much of his iudgement about the scituation of his clothes."

Taking through those allusions pointed at the "Courtier" group first, we read of the "down-right Scholler" that:

"He has not humbled his Meditations to the industrie of Complement, nor afflicted his braine in an elaborate legge. His body is not set vpon nice Pinnes, to bee turning and flexible for euery motion, but his scrape is homely, and his nod worse. He cannot kisse his hand and cry Madame, nor talke idly enough to beare her company. . . . A very Woodcocke would puzzle him in caruing, and hee wants the logicke of a Capon."

The "humbling of brain" referred to is also found in the "fine Gentleman" who

"hath read the booke of good manners, and by this time each of his limbes may read it."

Thus this worthy's body is also set upon "nice Pinnes" as the outcome of his study. Of Overbury's "Country Gentleman," who was laboriously emulating the "Gallants" it is said that

"by this time hee hath learned to kisse his hand, and make a leg both together."

Carving, the last thing referred to in the quotation from the "downe-right Scholler" above, was considered a fine art. The "fine Gentleman" one hears,

"is a calender of ten yeares, and marriage rusts him. Afterwards hee maintaines himselfe an implement of household by caruing and vshering."

That is all that was left him of his former glory, but the "Scholler" had not even acquired this polite art. Furthermore in the "downe-right Scholler" we read that :

"The time has got a veine of making him ridiculous, and men laugh at him by tradition, and no vnluckie absurdity, but is put vpon his profession, and done like a Scholler."

This passage strikes me as a direct apology for the "Scholler" who, according to the "tradition" of the "Overbury" writers, is

"*an intelligible Asse* : Or a silly fellow in blacke, that speakes Sentences more familiarly than sense. . . . 'Tis a wrong to his reputation to be ignorant of any thing ; and yet he knowes not that he knowes nothing. . . . His ill lucke is not so much in being a foole, as in being put to such paines to expresse it to the world : for what in others is naturall, in him (with much a doe) is artificial."

Besides, to the accusation in the "meere Fellow of an House," that

"Hee (*i.e.* the Fellow) is neuer more troubled, then when hee is to maintaine talke with a Gentle-woman : wherein hee commits more absurdities, then a Clown in eating of an egge."

Earle, referring to this "vnluckie absurdity," retorts :

"He [*i.e.* the "Scholler"] cannot kisse his hand and cry Madame, nor talke idly enough to beare her company."

But Earle is willing to admit that a "downe-right Scholler" is too fond of "college" talk, and is no horseman :

"He names this word Colledge too often, and his discourse beats too much on the Vniuersity. . . . Hee ascends a horse somewhat sinisterly, though not on the left side, and they both goe iogging in grieffe together."

These peculiarities are found of course in the "meere Scholer" :

"The Antiquity of his Vniuersity is his Creede, and the excellency of his Colledge (though but for a match at Foot-ball) an Article of his faith. . . . Vniuersity iests are his vniuersall discourse, and his newes, the demeanour of the Proctors."

Also :

"That he is a compleat Gallant in all points, *Cap à pea* ; witnes his horsemanship and the wearing of his weapons."

In this "character" of Earle's there is a clear reference to "Overbury's" "Innes of Court man." It runs as follows :

"He [*i.e.* "The downe-right Scholler"] is exceedingly censur'd by the Innes a Court men, for that hainous Vice being out of fashion."

In the "Fantasticke Innes of Court man" we read that

"He is distinguished from a Scholler by a paire of silke stockings, and a Beauer Hatte, which makes him contemne a Scholler as much as a scholler doth a school-maister. By that he hath heard one mooting, and seene two playes, he thinkes as basely of the *Vniuersitie*, as a young *Sophister* doth of the *Grammar-schoole*. . . . He is as farre behind a *Courtier* in his fashion, as a scholler is behind him : and the best grace in his behauior, is to forget his *acquaintance*."

The same thought is expressed in Earle's "meere young Gentleman of the Vniuersitie,"¹ which concludes with these words :

"But hee is now gone to the Inns of Court, where hee studies to forget what hee learn'd before, his acquaintance and the fashion."

Another "character" found in the "Micro-cosmographie" treating similar matter is the "Pretender to Learning"² in whom Earle depicts a "kind of Scholler-Mountebank." But whereas the "Overbury" character-writers would try to persuade their readers that all students and university teachers were ridiculous, if even not fraudulent persons, Earle tries to demonstrate that such were exceptions. He is evidently defending his own "set" from some attack made on them, and the similarity of expression in the instances quoted permits of a fairly certain deduction that Overbury's Characters were in the author's mind.

If we return to the "Pretender to Learning" we hear that—

"He has his sentences for Company, some scatterings of *Seneca* and *Tacitus*, which are good vpon all occasions."

This reminds us of the "meere Fellow of an House" (a), who

"If he hath read *Tacitus*, *Guicchardine*, or *Gallo-Belgicus*, he

¹ Mic. (Arber), No. 23, p. 44.

² Ibid., No. 31, p. 52 ff.

contemns the *late Lord-Treasurer*, for all the State-policie hee had ; and laughes to thinke what a Foole he could make of *Salomon*, if he were now aliue."

Again, the "Pretender to Learning :"

"is a great Nomen-clator of Authors, which hee has read in generall in the Catalogue, and in particular in the Title, and goes seldome so farre as the Dedication."

In the same way the "fellow of a House" (b) :

"hath lesse vse then possession of Bookes. He is not so proud, but hee will call the meanest Authour by his name ; nor so vnskill'd in the Heraldry of a Studie, but he knowes each mans place."

Two passages occurring in the "Pretender to Learning" would suit the "meere Scholler." They are as follows :

"A *Pretender to Learning* Is one that would make others more fooles then himselfe ; for though he know nothing, he would not haue the world know so much."

"He ha's taken paines to be an Asse, though not to be a Scholler, and is at length discouered and laught at."

The "meere Scholer"

"is an intelligible Asse : " etc. Cf. ante p. 136.

We have seen that in his "downe-right Scholler" Earle showed his disapproval of the "meere Scholer." But in the "characters" of the "meere young Gentleman of the Vniuersitie" (23), the "Pretender to Learning" (31), as well as that of the "Plodding Student" (51) the author admits the truth of some of the statements made by the earlier "characterists." Perhaps, like Stephens,¹ Earle overlooked the word "meere" (= "out and out," "thorough") prefixed to the offensive "characters."

In the "good old Man"² we have further evidence

¹ Stephens took umbrage at the "meere Common Lawyer" though the author of this sketch asserts at the end of the "character" that he did not make the hazardous statement, that all Lawyers were as the "meere" one : "Many of the same coate, which are much to be honor'd, partake of diuers of his indifferent qualities, but so, that Discretion, Vertue, and sometimes other *good learning* concurring for distinguishing Ornaments to them, make him (the "meere Common Lawyer") as a foile, to set their worth on."

For "meere," cf. p. 110, note 1.

² Mic. (Arber), pp. 89, 90. This "character" first appeared in the fifth Edition, 1629.

that Earle was acquainted with the "characters" of the older collection. Perhaps Overbury himself had drawn the portrait of "An old Man" (ii. 1614). This, unless it represents the "character" of some particular individual,¹ is a gross libel on old age, which is, as Earle felt, "a reuerent thing." Overbury (?) had written his sketch as though *all* old men were unpleasant—"Old men are to bee knowne blindfolded: for their talke is as terrible as their resemblance."² Earle points out "A *good*³ old Man Is the best Antiquitie, and which we may with least vanitie admire." That the younger author was consciously attempting to refute the statements found in the "old Man" will be seen in the following passages:

(Overbury's) "old Man."

They praise their owne times as vehemently, as if they would sell them.

They become wrinkled with frowning and facing youth.

Their discourse is vnanswerable, by reason of their obstinacie: and their speech is much, though little to the purpose. Truthes and lyes passe with an equall affirmation, for their memories seuerall is worne into one receptacle, and so they come out with one sense.

Earle's "good old Man."

You must pardon him if he like his own times better than these, because those things are follies to him now that were wisdomes then.

His very presence, and face puts vice out of countenance, and makes it an indecorum in a vicious man. . . . Hee is not apt to put the boy on a yonger man, nor the foole on a boy, but can distinguish grauity from a sowre look. . . .

Hee practises his experience on youth without the harshnesse of reproofe, and in his counsell is good companie. He ha's some old stories still of his owne seeing to confirme what he sayes, and makes them better in the telling; yet is not troublesome neither with the same tale again, but remembers with them, how oft he ha's told them.

¹ Northampton? Cf. p. 91; pp. 21, 24; p. 25 and note 1; p. 27 and note 6.

² In the "old Man"—in spite of the title—the plural pronoun is used almost throughout.

³ The italics are my own.

Thus Earle's phraseology is here often such as to indicate an acquaintance with Overbury's "old Man," a "character" that displeased the later writer.

The fact that Earle took offence at some of Overbury's Characters does not provide sufficient ground for the assumption that he was influenced by "Overbury."¹ But if the writings of the latter were known to Earle, it will be interesting to see whether he is indebted to his predecessor, and if so, how far this is the case.

Earle wrote "characters" of a "Sergeant" (36), a "Constable" (19), and in a later edition than the first appeared one on "A Prison" (58).² The worthy fellow of Merton can scarcely have had a personal acquaintance either with police or prisons. But the writer on jail-life in Overbury's books seems by the bitterness of his language to have had information at first hand. Any similarities that Earle's "characters" show will demonstrate a dependence either on "Overbury," or else on some work, probably a play,³ known to both. A Sergeant or Catchpole (36)⁴ says Earle,

"Is one of Gods Iudgements ; and which our Roarers doe onely conceiue terrible. Hee is the properest shape wherein they fancie Satan ; for hee is at most but an Arrester, and Hell a Dungeon."

Likewise the "Sarieant,"

"is a deuill made sometimes out of one of the twelue companies, and does but studie the parte and rehearse on earth, to be perfect when he comes to act it in hell ; that is his stage. . . . The deuill calles him his white sonne ; he is so like him that he is the worse for it. And he takes after his father, for the one torments bodyes as fast as the other tortures soules."

The same idea is found in the "Common cruell Iaylour" whose

"discent is then more ancyent, but more Ignoble, for then he comes

¹ Or rather, the "characters" issued under Overbury's name.

² First found in the fifth edition, 1629. Cf. Mic. (Arber), pp. 82, 83.

³ Perhaps Middleton and Dekker's "Roaring Girl," which seems to have provided the original figures for the "Sarieant," "His Yeoman," etc. Cf. pp. 114-116.

⁴ Mic. (Arber), p. 57.

of the race of those Angels, that fell with Lucifer from heauen, whither he neuer (or very hardly) returnes. . . . His house is the picture of hell. . . . ”

Further on one reads of the “ Sergeant or Catchpole ” that

“ His Ambush is a Shop Stall, or close Lane, and his Assault is cowardly at your backe.”

The “ Sarieant ”

“ goes muffled like a theefe, and carryes still the markes of one, for he steales vpon a man cowardly, plucks him by the throate, makes him stand, and fleeces him. . . . All the vacation he lyes Imbogude behinde the lettice of some blinde, drunken, bawdy ale-house, and if he spy his prey, out he leapes like a freebooter, and ryfles, or like a bandog worryes. . . . This Rauen picks not out mens eyes as others doe, all his spite is at their shoulders. . . . ”

Earle states that the “ Sergeant’s ”

“ hands [are] two Manacles hard to be fil’d off.”

In the earlier “ character ” the Sarieant

“ is a citizens birdlyme, and where he houlds, he hanges.”

Finally we notice that :

“ The common way to runne from him [*i.e.* the ‘ Sergeant ’], is through him, which is often attempted and atchieued, and no man is offer beaten out of Charitie.”

This reminds us of the statement made of the “ Yeoman,” viz., that he

“ dyes commonly with his guts ript vp, or els a sudden stab sends him of his last errant.”

Earle would naturally depict his ideal, which we find in the “ stayed Man ” (54). To seven passages in this sketch similar ones may be found in the three corresponding “ characters ”¹ of the Overbury collection, but perhaps the similarities are rather inconclusive if used to point out dependence of the later on the earlier authors. This is due to the elusive nature of a theme written in very general terms.

¹ Thus the “ Wise-man ” has four, the “ noble Spirit ” three, the “ noble and retir’d House-keeper,” four traits of the “ stayed Man.” All have one in common.

In Earle's "Shee precise Hypocrite" (43)¹ many of the ideas expressed in the "Puritan" group of Overbury's Characters are repeated. This again is mainly due to the similarity of matter treated. But since the parallel passages are not restricted to commonplaces, and are plentiful, they afford accumulative evidence that the "Micro-cosmographie" is indebted to the earlier work. We are told that the "Shee precise Hypocrite" :

"rayles at the Whore of Babylon for a very naughty Woman. Shee ha's left her Virginitie as a Relique of Popery, and marries in her Tribe without a Ring."

In Overbury's Characters the "Precisian" (vi.a),
 "will not sticke to commit fornication or Adulterie, so it be done in the feare of God, and for the propagation of the godly ; and can finde in his heart to lye with any whore, saue the whore of *Babylon*."

Then the "Shee precise Hypocrite"
 "doubts of the Virgin Marie's Saluation and dare not Saint her, but knowes her owne place in heauen as perfectly, as the Pew shee ha's a key to."

Her counterpart, the Precisian
 "is so sure of *his* saluation, that he will not change places in heauen, with the *Virgin Marie*, without boote."

Then we read that,
 "She accounts nothing Vices but Superstition, and an Oath, and thinkes Adultery a lesse sinne, then to sweare by my Truly."

In like manner
 "Hee can better afford you ten lies, then one oath, and dare commit any sinne gilded with a pretence of sanctity. He will not sticke to commit fornication or Adulterie. . . ."

Moreover the "Shee precise Hypocrite"
 "calls her owne daughters *Rebecka* and *Abigail*, and not *Anne* but *Hannah*."

The "Precisian" goes a step further :
 "Hee hath nicknamde all the Prophets and Apostles with his Sonnes, and begets nothing but *Vertues* for Daughters."

¹ Mic. (Arber), pp. 63, 64.

The superstitious horror of organs was common to all Puritans. Thus we read :

"Shee suffers them [*i.e.* her daughters] not to learne on the Virginalls, because of their affinity with the Organs, but is reconcil'd to the Bells for the Chymes sake, since they were reform'd to the tune of a Psalme."

On the other hand the "Precisian"

"thinkes euery Organist is in the state of damnation, and had rather hear one of *Robert Wisdoms Psalmes*, then the best *Hymne* a *Cherubin* can sing."

In Earle's "meere dull Phisitian" (4)¹ some passages are contained which have correspondences in "Overbury's" "Quacksaluer" (vi.b 1615). Three are given below :

"meere dull Phisitian."

"His learning consists much in reckoning vp the hard names of diseases. . . He is indeed only languag'd in diseases, and speakes Greeke many times when knows he not. . . . He tels you your *Maladie* in Greeke, though it be but a cold, or head ach." . . .

"If you send this once to him, you must resolute to be sicke howsoever, for he will neuer leaue examining your Water till hee haue shakt it into a disease. . . . If he see you himselfe, his presence is the worst visitation: for if he cannot heale your sicknes, he will bee sure to helpe it."

"If he be single, he is in league with his Shee-Apothecary, and because it is the Physitian, the husband is Patient."

"Quacksaluer."

"Is a Mountebanke of a larger bill then a Taylor; if he can but come by names enow of Diseases, to stuffe it with, 'tis all the skill hee studies for."

. . . "to one that would be speedily cured, he hath more delaies, and doubles, then a Hare, or a Law suit: hee seekes to set vs at variance with nature, and rather then hee shall want diseases, hee'le beget them."

"He parts stakes with some Apothecary, in the Suburbs at whose House hee lies: and though he be neuer so familiar with his wife; the Apothecary dare not (for the richest Horne in's shoppe) displease him."

¹ Mic. (Arber), pp. 25, 26.

Of these, the last quotation from Earle is the most striking; it expresses an idea borrowed from its parallel, but so phrased as to contain the pun occurring in the word "Patient."

Earle seems indebted to Overbury for a passage in "An Vp-start Countrey Knight" (17)¹ It is as follows:

"In summe, he is but a clod of his owne earth; or his Land is the Dunghill, and he the Cocke that crows ouer it. And commonly his race is quickly runne, and his Childrens Children, though they scape hanging, returne to the place from whence they came."

This might have been suggested by the closing lines of the "Country Gentleman" (ii. 1614), viz.,

"But this is not his element, but he must home againe, being like a Dor, that ends his flight in a dunghill."

Similar to the "Purueiour of Tobacco" which appeared but once (in vi.b 1615), a "character" is found in the "Micro-cosmographie," and is called the "Tobacco-seller" (38).² Though it does not contain any vigorous attack on tobacco itself, as the "Purueiour" did, it treats its subject in a very similar manner; and, in spite of its brevity two passages occur which remind one forcibly of the earlier sketch. They run thus:

A Tobacco-seller.

"Is the onely man that finds good in it which others brag of, but doe not; for it is meate, drinke, and clothes to him."

"Hee is the piecing commonly of some other trade, which is bawd to his Tobacco, and that to his wife, which is

*A Purueiour of Tobacco.
(Only in vi.b.)*

"... this making of Fire-workes, brings most commodity: For hee sels his Tobacco with this condition, that they that buy it, shall bee vndone by it."

"Many trades hath he slicht through; but this making of Fire-workes, brings most commodity. . . ."

¹ Ibid. p. 39.

² Ibid. p. 59.

the flame that follows this
smoke."

"Hee causes his wife to sit in
his Ware-house, to no other
purpose, then (as a Countrey
Poticary hangs vp an *Aligarta*
in his shop) that while his Cus-
tomers are gaping at her, hee may
cosen them of their waight."

The instances in which Earle repeats ideas which had already been expressed in Overbury's Characters have been by no means exhaustively treated. In fact only some typical examples have been given, and about forty¹ more may be found. Below is a table indicating the "characters" in which some correspondences occur, and the number I have noted in each.

No. in Microc.	Earle's "character of"	No. of, similar passages.	"Overbury's" "character" of	In Edition.
6	discontented Man	.. 4	Distaster of the Time	vi.b.
6	" "	.. 2	Melancholy Man	.. v.
18	Gallant	.. 4	fine Gentleman	.. ii.
18	" "	.. 1	affected Traueller	.. ii.
18	" "	.. 3	Courtier	.. ii.
21	A Player	.. 4	excellent Actor	.. vi.b.
22	Detractor	.. 2	Distaster of the Time	vi.b.
24	Pot-Poet	.. 1	Almanacke-maker	.. vi.b.
33	handsome Hostesse	.. 1	Host	.. ii.
42	Surgeon	.. 1	Whoore	.. v.
45	Atorney	.. }	{ meere Pettyfogger	.. vi.b.
45	" "	.. }	{ Diuellish Vsurer	.. vi.b.
50	Herald	.. 1	Welchman	.. ii.
58	Prison	.. 2	Prison	.. ix.
58	" "	.. 1	Prisoner	.. ix.
59	Seruimgman	.. 5	Seruimgman	.. ii.
69	lasciuious man	.. 1	ignorant glory-hunter	.. ii.
74	sordid rich man	.. 3	Diuellish Vsurer	.. vi.b.
74	" " "	.. 1	Country Gentleman	.. ii.
75	meere great man	.. 2	elder Brother	

Of course Earle has written a large number of "characters" in which no passage reminds us of

¹ Probably more could be found.

Overbury's ¹ work ; but it certainly is surprising that in the remaining essays so many similarities may be traced. Especially in the case of the "Tobacco-seller," where the correspondence is perhaps sufficient to imply an acquaintance on Earle's part with a "character" but once published, which seems since to have escaped the notice of the editors of Overbury's Works. The late Sir R. Jebb has pointed out but two instances in which the Fellow of Merton appears to be indebted to Theophrastus. It is therefore legitimate to infer that Overbury's Characters served Earle as a model for his "Micro-cosmographie," and yielded more suggestions than is commonly supposed. This indebtedness on Earle's part may be largely ascribed to his lack of knowledge of certain sorts of men. He was still young when he wrote his "Micro-cosmographie," and whenever he did not possess direct knowledge of the subject ² he was treating, he naturally had recourse to books, to Overbury's work amongst others.

Those who have read both Earle and Overbury admit that the latter was more man of the world, whilst they attribute to Earle a finer humour and a keener insight into the springs of men's actions. The "Micro-cosmographie," however, is usually preferred to Overbury, mainly on account of its author's greater mastery over English. Both books betray the humours and "conceits" that spoiled the English prose of the period, but Earle's is less affected by these blemishes. This is in great part due to the circumstances in which each author lived.³

¹ Though "Overbury" will in future be used whenever speaking of the "Characters" attributed to him, it must not be forgotten that only some of those appearing in the second impression (1614) were actually written by him.

² As of prison-life, for instance. The last addition of fresh material (in the 16th impression) treating of usury, debt and imprisonment is remarkable, because it seems to be the work of one author only, who was evidently an expert in the subject he dealt with.

³ Earle described with scholarly ease the men daily passing before his study windows in the Oxford streets ; the earlier "characterists" wrote "to order" further additions of characters amid the turmoil and whirl of London life. The world of the one is more refined, that of the other more comprehensive.

The "Micro-cosmographie" was probably not begun till ten years after Overbury's death, at a time therefore when English prose was slowly recuperating from its juvenile ailment of "conceits."¹ Indeed Earle's superiority in style over his contemporaries is very marked. With modernized spelling, in Dr. Bliss's edition for instance, the "Micro-cosmographie" scarcely betrays a Jacobean flavour, and might almost have been written a hundred years later.

After its appearance the popularity of Overbury waned, so that in the following century our author was even less known than at the present day, now that the histories of English literature devote at least some fraction of a column to him. But the "Micro-cosmographie" found in Bliss an appreciative admirer, and was by him reintroduced to English letters.

Thus, while Earle has an assured place in the development of the English novel, Overbury is referred to almost as a freak, as an appendage to Earle and others, his own imitators. But this is hardly fair. Except for Overbury's example and success the "Micro-cosmographie" might never have been penned.

But Overbury's Characters, which from henceforth were merged in the mass of "Character-writings," exerted with them a considerable influence on the subsequent development of English literature.

¹ The "characters" which appeared in the later editions of Overbury's book betray as fully "conceited" a style as those of the second impression.

CHAPTER VIII

FINAL OUTGROWTHS OF CHARACTER-WRITING

THE large number of collections of "characters" written before 1700—the titles of over 150 of them are preserved¹—bears witness to the immense popularity enjoyed by "character-writings" in the seventeenth century. Not only did several authors write such sketches, but in some cases their results were so successful that edition followed edition in quick succession. For instance:

Joseph Hall's "Characters of Virtues and Vices" appeared in 1608, 1627.

Overbury's "Characters" in 1614, 1614, 1614, 1614, 1615, 1616, 1616, 1616, 1618, 1622, 1626, 1627, 1628, 1630, 1632, 1638, 1655, 1664 [1756].

Stephens' "Satyrical Essayes, Characters, and Others," in 1615, 1615, 1631.

Nicholas Breton's "The Good and the Badde, or Descriptions of the Worthies and Vnworthies of this Age," etc., in 1616, 1643.

John Earle's "Micro-cosmographie"² in 1628 (1628 ? 1628 ? 1628 ?), *fourth* edition in 1629, 1630, 1633, 1638, 1650, 1659 (?), 1664, 1669, 1676 [1732, 1740, 1786, 1811 (Bliss), 1868-9 (Arber)].

Wye Saltonstall's "Picturæ Loquentes: or Pictures drawne forth in Characters. With a Poeme of a Maid," in 1631, 1635.

Lord North's "characters" contained in his "Forest of Varieties" in 1645, 1659.

¹ Dr. Bliss, who in his 1811 edition of Earle's "Micro-cosmographie" does not include Wotton's "Characters of Sundry Personages" [cf. *Reliquiæ Wottonianæ*, 1641] enumerates *thirty-seven* books containing "characters," and in certain cases mentions extracts. [Cf. *Mic.* (B-D), p. 219 ff.]

² W. C. Baldwin states: "I find titles of over one hundred and fifty character-books published within the [17th] century." [Cf. Baldwin: *Ben Jonson's Indebtedness to the Greek Character-Sketch*; *Mod. Lang. Notes* (1901), xvi, p. 384 ff.]

³ From Earle on the dates are taken from Bliss's 1811 ed. of Earle's *Micro-cosmography*.

Besides these an anonymous "Character of England," appearing in 1659, the title-page of which is marked "Third Edition."

Since such a great quantity of "characters" was brought into existence by the success of Overbury's book, it is impossible in a short space to demonstrate the amount of dependence or originality shown by each author. But among the "characterists" not yet treated the following are worthy of something more than a cursory notice :

Nicholas Breton, the author of "*Characters upon Essays, Moral and Divine*," 1615, and "*The Good and the Badde, or Descriptions of the Worthies and Vnworthies of this Age. Where the Best may see their Graces, and the Worst discerne their Basenesse*." London, Printed, etc., 1616.

It can be seen from the arrangement of the "characters" ¹ that Breton worked systematically. His essays are not the product of idle moments as were those of Earle and Overbury. The language of the sketches is terse and pithy ; they are short, but not so replete with wit and humour as are those of the two greater "characterists."

D. Lupton : "*London and the Countrey Carbonadoed and Quartred into severall Characters*," London, 1632 ; reprinted in Halliwell's "Books of Characters, illustrating the Habits and Manners of Englishmen from the reign of James I. to the Restoration." (London, 1857.)

The "characters" are quaint ; some throw light on obsolete institutions. Bliss has reprinted Lupton's "character" of "The Horse."

¹ Of the "*Good and the Bad*" there are the following "characters" (in Morley's "Character-Writings of the Seventeenth Century") : A Worthy King—An Unworthy King, A Worthy Queen, A Worthy Prince—An Unworthy Prince, A Worthy Privy Councillor—An Unworthy Councillor, A Nobleman—An Unnoble Man, A Worthy Bishop—An Unworthy Bishop, A Worthy Judge—An Unworthy Judge, A Worthy Knight—An Unworthy Knight, A Worthy Gentleman—An Unworthy Gentleman, A Worthy Lawyer—An Unworthy Lawyer, A Worthy Soldier—An Untrained Soldier, A Worthy Physician—An Unworthy Physician, A Worthy Merchant—An Unworthy Merchant, A Good Man—An Athiest or Most Bad Man, A Wise Man—A Fool, An Honest Man—A Knave, An Usurer, A Beggar, A Virgin—A Wanton Woman, A Quiet Woman—An Unquiet Woman, A Good Wife, An Effeminate Fool, A Parasite, A Drunkard, A Coward, An Honest Poor Man, A Just Man, A Repentant Sinner, A Reprobate, An Old Man—A Young Man, A Holy Man.

Of Breton's former work Prof. H. Morley has reprinted the *Essays* on Wisdom, Learning, Knowledge, Practice, Patience, Love, Peace, War, Valour, Resolution, Honour, Truth, Time, Death, Faith, and Fear.

Richard Flecknoe: Fifty-five Enigmatical Characters, all very exactly drawn to the Life, from several Persons, Humours, Dispositions. Pleasant and full of Delight. By R. F., Esq., London: Printed, etc. 1665. His "Valiant Man" is reprinted by Bliss.

Walter Charleton: A brief discourse concerning the different wits of men. 1669.

Samuel Butler, the author of "Hudibras," was probably the last of the "characterists." In the second volume of his "Remains" (published 79 years after his death) appeared 120 "characters," of which Morley has reprinted some eighty. According to the late Prof. Minto¹ Butler's "wit has a much stronger flavour than either Overbury's or Earle's." The reason that Butler is, comparatively speaking, unknown as a "characterist" lies in the fact that his "Characters" appeared in 1759, thus at a time² when this branch of literature was no longer popular.

In the first half of the seventeenth century a mania for writing "characters," both in verse and prose,³ seems to have become prevalent. Almost every author tried his skill in this form of the essay. The Character-sketch found its way even into the plays of this period, naturally in a metrical dress. Thus Dekker⁴ draws the "true picture of a happy man" as follows:

He that makes gold his wife, but not his whore,
 He that at noon-day walks by a prison door,
 He that i' th' sun is neither beam nor mote,
 He that's not mad after a petticoat,
 He for whom poor men's curses dig no grave,
 He that is neither lord's nor lawyer's slave,
 He that makes this his sea, and that his shore,
 He that in's coffin is richer than before,
 He that counts youth his sword, and age his staff,
 He whose right hand carves his own epitaph,

¹ Manual of Engl. Prose Lit., p. 306.

² Bliss did not include Butler's Characters in his list, though he mentioned them.

³ "Characters" in verse are fairly frequently met with. Morley cites Milton's Odes "On the University Carrier," Hobson, and Wordsworth's "Happy Warrior" (cf. p. 92, note 3). Stephens' "Essayes" are really rhyming "characters." But Wotton's "happy life" is the best example of a "character" written in verse.

⁴ Dekker (M. p. 202), ii. Honest Whore, i. 2. (First printed, 1630.)

He that upon his deathbed is a swan,
And dead, no crow—he is a happy man.”

Webster's "White Devil," printed as early as 1612, contains the "perfect character of a whore," which perhaps suggested similes for the "Whoore" (v. 1614).¹

Much later still Sir G. Etherege, in his comedy "The Man of Mode; or, Sir Fopling Flutter,"² included the "Character of a compleat Gentleman,"

"Who, according to Sir *Fopling*, ought to dress well, dance | Well, fence well, have a Genius for Love-letters, an | Agreeable Voice for a Chamber, be very Amorous, | Something discreet, but not over Constant."

In the last addition of the ixth impression, we saw "characters" were made use of for the purpose of arousing indignation against the abuses existing in English prison life. Here the "character" begins to depart from its original ideal, and invades the realm of the political pamphlet proper. This was doubtless done because the author hoped thereby to make his views known to a wider circle of readers. Traces of this new employment of "characters" were not wanting, even in the earlier issues of Overbury's works, in the attacks made on the Puritans, or in the veiled allusions to James' Scotch favourites in the "Intruder into fauour." This tendency developed rapidly. The troubles of Charles' reign caused the character-sketch to become a favourite medium by which the adherents of each party ridiculed their opponents. Almost all the "characters" written after 1640 were composed in the spirit of political warfare.³ At first the attacks are directed at whole groups of men, then at individuals. But so far names are not mentioned. Later on the tone becomes personal; thus among Butler's "Remains" we find the following "character" of the "Duke of Bucks,"⁴ who

¹ Webster and Tourneur, M. p. 46. Act iii. Sc. 1. Cf. p. 107, note 2.

² Act i. Sc. 1. First published in 1676.

³ In Bliss's list of Character-writings, Nos. xxix.-xxxiv. are instances.

⁴ Buckingham himself, whose portrait Butler has drawn with such loving care, was also a "characterist," and has written a "Character of an Ugly

"Is one that has studied the whole body of vice. His parts are disproportionate to the whole, and, like a monster, he has more of some and less of others than he should have. He has pulled down all that fabric that Nature raised in him, and built himself up again after a model of his own. He has dammed up all those lights that Nature made into the noblest prospects of the world, and opened other little blind loopholes backward by turning day into night and night into day. . . . Perpetual surfeits of pleasure have filled his mind with bad and vicious humours (as well as his body with a nursery of diseases), which makes him affect new and extravagant ways as being sick and tired with the old. Continual wine, women, and music put false values upon things which by custom become habitual, and debauch his understanding so that he retains no right notion nor sense of things; and as the same dose of the same physic has no operation on those that are much used to it, so his pleasures require a larger proportion of excess and variety to render him sensible of them. He rises, eats, and goes to bed by the Julian account, long after all others that go by the new style, and keeps the same hours with owls and the antipodes. . . . He does not dwell in his house, but haunts it like an evil spirit that walks all night to disturb the family, and never appears by day. . . . He is as inconstant as the moon which he lives under; and although he does nothing but advise with his pillow all day, he is as great a stranger to himself as he is to the rest of the world. . . . Thus, with St. Paul, though in a different sense, he dies daily, and only lives in the night. He deforms Nature while he intends to adorn her, like Indians that hang jewels in their lips and noses. His ears are perpetually drilled with a fiddlestick. He endures pleasures with less patience than other men do their pains."¹

Without mentioning actual names, a proceeding which was probably unnecessary, Butler attacks Charles' statesmen and courtiers. In reading his *Characters*² one feels that he has definite individuals in his mind, and is not

Woman: or a Hue and Cry after Beauty" in 1678 [cf. *Mic. (B-I)*, p. 276], and the "Character of a Tory in 1659, in answer to that of a Trimmer (never published) both written in King Charles's reign." [Ibid. p. 277. Reprinted in the "Works of George Villiers, second Duke of Buckingham," 4to, London, 1721.] The "character" of a "Trimmer" referred to was written by Sir Wm. Coventry, and printed in 1689. [Cf. *ibid.* p. 276.]

¹ Cf. Morley, *C.W.*, pp. 399, 400.

² Probably the late appearance of Butler's "Characters" is due to the personal attacks contained in them. But, like Earle's first sketches, they possibly had a large private circulation—Butler would not have written 120 "characters" without sufficient encouragement.

writing in general terms. But on the whole Butler is a follower of Overbury and Earle. His sketches are usually short and to the point. One of his longest descriptions, that of "A Small Poet"¹ contains perhaps an allusion to Stephens, thus.

"If you dislike him (*i.e.* the Small Poet), it is at your own peril; he is sure to put in a caveat beforehand against your understanding."

This passage refers to the "imitating Characterist's" preface "To the People" (quoted p. 60).

In the same sketch Butler relates some anecdotes of a poetaster called Benlewes. By doing so he tends to develop the "character" into an essay. Often on account of the personal rather than general tone of his "characters" Butler stands nearer to la Bruyère than do most of the earlier English character-writers. But, like his predecessors, Butler is quite independent of the French moralist. The "Caractères" appeared in print² early in January, 1688, thus eight years after the death of the author of "Hudibras," at a time, therefore, when in England "character-writing" had already lost its vogue. On the other hand it is more than doubtful whether la Bruyère had ever felt the influence of the English imitators of Theophrastus,³ or had indeed even known their names.

¹ Cf. Morley, C.W., p. 327.

² Cf. M. G. Servois: *Oeuvres de la Bruyère* (in "Les grands Écrivains de la France"); Paris, 1865. i. xcvi.—La Bruyère worked at his "Caractères" in great silence; he may have begun to prepare them for the press at some date between 1670-1680 [*ibid.* p. xcii.], but admitted Boileau into his secret only in May, 1687 [*ibid.* p. lxxxix.].

³ Possibly La Bruyère had originally no intention whatever of imitating Theophrastus; indeed his translation of the "Characters" may have been due to an afterthought. [Cf. *ibid.* p. xcii.] The "Caractères" are not "characters" in the English sense at all; in fact la Bruyère at first called them his "Reflections" ["ses réflexions," cf. *ibid.* p. xcii.]. The earlier ones consisted rather of collections of aphorisms in the manner of la Rochefoucauld than connected essays. But, later, each "caractère" embodies several character-sketches of personages at the Court of Louis XIV. under such designations as Cydias (=Fontenelle), Irène (=Mme. de Montespan), etc. "Keys" in many cases elucidate the identity of the persons referred to under these pseudonyms, which usually are but thin disguises. That one "caractère," such as "De l'homme" for instance, should include a variety of "characters" is due to the great scope of the subject—there are so many different kinds of men. La Bruyère was a shrewd observer; he has handed down many portraits of individuals of his time rather than schematized

The French classicists ignored English letters¹; up to a much later period Shakespeare himself was repulsive to French taste on account of his "barbarism."

"Characters," the peculiar product of the days of Stuart rule in England, were revived by Steele in his "Tatler"² at the end of the first decade of the eighteenth century. Though the former literary favourites are not recognized at once in his bright essays, because of the many changes which have been effected, one may easily trace the course of development culminating in those papers descriptive of Sir Roger de Coverley and his friends which appeared in the "Spectator." The merit of these innovations is probably due in greater measure to Addison than to his more homely and conservative friend.

The first change one finds is the substitution of a Latin quotation for a title to the essay.

Furthermore, to the figure whose character is to be drawn, is given a fictitious but suggestive name. Thus Tom Wildair³ and Tom Varnish⁴ appear. They are gentlemen of the Inner and Middle Temple respectively, and possess many traits found in Overbury's "Innes of Court man." Orlando the Fair is the epithet of a notorious rake.⁵ Essay 57 contains not only the "character" of Harry Coppersmith,⁶ a usurer, but the description of some purse-proud men, his friends.

"characters" of large groups of mankind whose appearance, behaviour, and acts are the outcome of some (moral) impulse. The refinement of la Bruyère's style contrasts greatly with the ruggedness and inelegance of many of the English "characters."

¹ Scarcely any English books were honoured by translation into French: certainly very few collections of "characters" were. Earle's *Micro-cosmographie* is, as far as I know, the only instance. J. Dymock translated it into French, and called it: *Le Vice ridiculé et la Vertue Louée*, (London, 1671.) Cf. Mic. (Arber), p. 16.

² The text wherever quoted is taken from "The Tatler, Selected Essays," Warne's Chandos Classics.

³ No. 60, Aug. 27, 1709. (S.) The initial in brackets denotes the author of the paper, thus S (= Steele), A (= Addison), Sw. (= Swift).

⁴ No. 136, Feb. 21, 1709-10 (S.).

⁵ Robert Fielding, called Beau Fielding. No. 50, Aug. 4, 1707 (S.); No. 51, Aug. 6, 1709 (S.).

⁶ No. 57, Aug. 20, 1709 (S.).

Steele however does not limit himself to the delineation of character in general terms, but enlivens his sketch by the introduction of illustrative anecdote. This is a most important step, as it tends to link the "character" with the novel. Almost in every paper may anecdotes be found; good instances occur in Nos. 56 (*The Sharper*), 60 (*Tom Wildair*), 66 (*The Clergy and their delivery*), 85 (*A matrimonial Quarrel, in one of the "Jenny Distaff" series*), 135 (*Minute Philosophers, a theme akin to Earle's "Atheist"*).¹

Furthermore Steele frequently unites two or three "characters" in the same essay for purpose of contrast, thus in 126 (*The Prude and the Coquette*,² which contains descriptions and anecdotes of *Belvidera*, the woman of "good sense without affectation"; of *Lydia*, "a finished coquette"; and *Castabella*, the prude).

To especially successful sketches Steele added sequels; thus No. 155 (*"The Political Upholsterer"*³) was continued in No. 232 (*"The Upholsterer's Letter"*⁴). Both remind one forcibly of *Theophrastus' "Newsmaker."* To these may be added those essays in which *Jenny Distaff*⁵ figures as heroine.

Perhaps the most interesting paper on account of the "characters" contained in it is No. 132. This describes the predecessor of that celebrated club, which had the honour of naming *Sir Roger de Coverley* among its members. In this essay⁶ we read:

"Sir *Jeffrey Notch*, who is the oldest of the club, has been in possession of the right-hand chair time out of mind, and is the only man among us that has the liberty of stirring the fire. This our foreman is a gentleman of an ancient family, that came to a great estate some years before he had discretion, and run it out in hounds, horses, and cock-fighting; for which reason he looks upon

¹ These papers appeared in "*The Tatler*" as follows: No. 56, Aug. 18, 1709 (S.); No. 60, Aug. 27, 1709 (S.); No. 66, Sep. 10, 1709 (S., Sw.); No. 85, Oct. 25, 1709 (S.); No. 135, Feb. 18, 1709-10 (S.).

² No. 126, Jan. 28, 1709-10 (S.).

³ No. 155, Apr. 6, 1710 (A.).

⁴ No. 232, Oct. 3, 1710 (S.).

⁵ Viz., Nos. 75 (A., S.); 79 (S.); 85 (S.); 104 (S.).

⁶ No. 132, Feb. 11, 1709-10 (S.).

himself as an honest, worthy gentleman, who has had misfortunes in the world, and calls every thriving man a pitiful upstart.

Major Matchlock is the next senior, who served in the last civil wars, and has all the battles by heart. He does not think any action in Europe worth talking of since the fight of Marston Moor; and every night tells us of his having been knocked off his horse at the rising of the London apprentices; for which he is in great esteem among us.

Honest old Dick Reptile is the third of our society. He is a good-natured, indolent man, who speaks little himself, but laughs at our jokes; and brings his young nephew along with him, a youth of eighteen years old, to shew him good company, and give him a taste of the world. This young fellow sits generally silent; but whenever he opens his mouth, or laughs at anything that passes, he is constantly told by his uncle, after a jocular manner, "Ay, ay, Jack, you young men thinks us fools; but we old men know you are."

The greatest wit of our company, next to myself, is a Bencher of the neighbouring Inn, who in his youth frequented the ordinaries about Charing Cross, and pretends to have been intimate with Jack Ogle. He has about ten distichs of *Hudibras* without book, and never leaves the club until he has applied them all. If any modern wit be mentioned, or any town-frolic spoken of, he shakes his head at the dulness of the present age, and tells us a story of Jack Ogle."

Thus does Steele describe the "fogies" of his day, but in the course of the essay he brings out further points in their characters by anecdotes, and by relating some of their little sayings and actions.

Other "characters" are embedded in Nos. 85 ("A matrimonial Quarrel;"¹ in this case a description of "Tim Dapper, a country Gentleman"), 86 ("Sir Harry Quickset," treating of ceremonious and clumsy country-people), 158 ("Tom Folio," a "mere collector of books"), 165 ("The Critic"—a fop), 217 ("On Scolds").

But the furthest development of character-writing under Steele and Addison is seen in the "Spectator." The most successful figure contained in its essays is that of

¹ No. 85, Oct. 25, 1709 (S.); No. 86, Oct. 27, 1709 (A., S.); No. 158, Apr. 13, 1710 (A.); No. 165, Apr. 29, 1710 (A.); No. 217, Aug. 29, 1710 (S.).

Sir Roger de Coverley, a lineal descendant of Overbury's "Country Gentleman." And yet what a vast difference exists between them! Overbury's creation is a rather unpleasant person. He does not strike us as a real man. We do not know his name. We are told :

"If hee goes to Court, it is in yellow stockings, and if he be in winter, in a sleight taffetic cloke, and pumpes and pantaffles."

Also we know that he made a fool of himself when there. But did all, or even most Country Gentlemen do this, or only one particular Country Gentleman?

Two weaknesses were inherent to "characters," namely, one-sidedness and vagueness. The first is due to the fact that "characters" were classed either as "the good or the bad." In real life can any instance be found of a man being entirely good, or utterly bad? But the "character" of a "Good Man" required him to be tainted by no vices soever. Therefore in "characters" the portraits of individuals were scarcely attempted. Instead of this, we find embodied in one single hypothetical individual a concentrated essence of virtues or vices, which are scattered broadcast throughout the whole community. The vagueness can be similarly explained. A "character" is not the portrait of one particular individual, but an attempt to describe a whole class of men. The acts attributed to such a "character" are doubtful. They are not those which any one in particular has committed, but which he might commit, given the same temperament or situation in life.

It is this one-sidedness and vagueness of the character-sketches that causes them to appear so unreal and artificial to us. Addison and Steele recognised and avoided these defects. Already in the "Tatler" essays on different types of men and their peculiarities were projected. But, instead of writing in general terms about the "characteristics" common to the bulk of men in some particular walk of life as the "characterists" would have done, the great essayists portrayed individuals well known to themselves, and showed how these men were swayed by

their surroundings, or affected by some little weaknesses, which render them human. They are not monsters either of virtue or of vice, such as the "characterists" loved to depict. Sir Roger, the "perverse Widow," Will Wimble, Will Honeycomb are by no means perfect men or women, but they are amiable. Their foibles are treated in a sympathetic manner, not held up to ridicule; they do not form part of an accusation, as they would have done in the "character-writings." The author is not both judge and accuser, who passes a verdict¹ on the unfortunate "character" in the almost inevitable summary.

In the 34th paper of the "Spectator" Addison openly announces the novel treatment that "characters" would receive in that journal.

"I must however intreat every particular Person, who does me the Honour to be a Reader of this Paper, never to think himself, or any one of his Friends or Enemies, aimed at in what is said: For I promise him, never to draw a faulty Character which does not fit at least a Thousand People; or to publish a single Paper, that is not written in the Spirit of Benevolence and with a Love to Mankind."²

When comparing Overbury's "Country Gentleman" with Sir Roger de Coverley one notices certain similarities, but also a great number of differences.

Thus the "Country Gentleman" is stingy and mean, afraid of London. He also boasts snobbishly that he has seen such great men at court, where however he cut a very poor figure. There is none of this in the worthy and benevolent knight. But the greatest difference lies in the treatment itself of the two "characters." Thus:

¹ The "meere Fellow of an House" concludes thus: Lastly, he is one that respects no man in the *Vniuersitie*, and is respected by no man out of it."

The "Yeoman"—"His beginning is detestable, his courses desperate, and his end damnable."

The "very Woman"—"Hir chief commendation is, she brings a man to repentance."

The "affected Traueller"—"In a word, his religion is fashion, and both body and soule are governed by fame, he loues most voices aboue truth."

Because of the "spirit of malice" in which the "characters" were written many more instances could be cited.

² End of Essay 34, Apr. 9, 1711.

A Country Gentleman Is a thing out of whose corruption the generation of a Iustice of peace is produced. Hee speakes statutes and husbandry well enough, to make his neighbours think him a wise-man; hee is well skilled in *Arithmetike* or rates; and hath eloquence enough to saue his two-pence. His conversation amongst his Tenants is desperate; but amongst his equalls full of doubt."

On the other hand "I must not omit," says Steele,

"that Sir Roger is a Justice of the *Quorum*; that he fills the chair at a Quarter-Session with great Abilities, and three Months ago, gained universal Applause by explaining a Passage in the Game-Act."¹

But when requested to decide a knotty point at law Sir Roger declares "that *much might be said on both sides*."² Who does not remember his exquisite behaviour as Magistrate?³

"The Court was sat before Sir Roger came; but notwithstanding all the Justices had taken their Places upon the Bench, they made room for the old Knight at the Head of them; who for his Reputation in the Country took occasion to whisper in the Judge's Ear, *That he was glad his Lordship had met with so much good Weather in his Circuit*. . . . After about an Hour's Sitting, I observed to my great Surprize, in the Midst of a Trial, that my Friend Sir Roger was getting up to speak. I was in some Pain for him, till I found he had acquitted himself of two or three Sentences, with a Look of much Business and great Intrepidity. . . . The Speech he made was so little to the Purpose, that I shall not trouble my Readers with an Account of it; and I believe was not so much designed by the Knight to inform the Court, as to give him a Figure in my Eye, and keep up his Credit in the Country. I was highly delighted, when the Court rose, to see the Gentlemen of the Country gathering about my old Friend, and striving who should compliment him most; at the same time that the ordinary People gazed upon him at a distance, not a little admiring his Courage, that he was not afraid to speak to the Judge."

Meanness is no part of the Knight, who is unlike the "Country Gentleman," who

"when hee trauelleth hee will goe ten mile out of the way, to a Cosen's house of his to saue charges; and rewards the Seruants by taking them by the hand when hee departs. Nothing vnder a

¹ Spectator, No. 2, March 2, 1711 (S.).

² Ibid. No. 122, July 20, 1711 (A.).

³ Ibid.

Sub-pœna can draw him to *London*, and when hee is there, hee stickes fast vpon euerie object, casts his eyes away vpon gazing, and becomes the prey of euery cut-purse."

Sir Roger is not unduly fond of saving expense, but does like sparing his game, and first

"gets into the Frontiers of his Estate, before he beats about in search of a Hare or Partridge, on purpose to spare his own Fields, where he is always sure of finding Diversion, when the worst comes to the worst."¹

Though the Knight is openhanded with money, (unlike the Country Gentleman),

"When he comes into a House he calls the Servants by their Names, and talks all the way Up Stairs to a Visit."²

It is not in London that Sir Roger loses his purse. The Gypsies pick his pocket while the fortune-teller is prophesying to him the good news that the "perverse Widow" will relent.³ Sir Roger does not present a ludicrous figure at Court, yet he provides more amusement at the theatre for the spectators than does the play.⁴

Besides the chief personages of the club lesser "characters" are introduced. Of these an instance may be quoted, as it is written in the fashion so popular in the seventeenth century.⁵

"The first of them . . . that has a Spaniel by his Side, is a Yeoman of about an hundred Pounds a Year, an honest Man: He is just within the Game-Act, and qualified to kill an Hare or a Pheasant: He knocks down a Dinner with his Gun twice or thrice a Week; and by that means lives much cheaper than those who have not so good an Estate as himself. He would be a good Neighbour if he did not destroy so many Partridges: in short, he is a very sensible Man; shoots flying; and has been several times Foreman of the Petty-Jury."

Sir Roger describes a "Fine Gentleman,"⁶ one of his ancestors, whose picture was exhibited in the picture-

¹ No. 131, July 31, 1711 (A.).

² No. 130, July 30, 1711 (A.).

³ No. 122, July 20, 1711 (A.).

⁴ No. 2, March 2, 1711 (S.).

⁵ No. 335, Mar. 25, 1712 (A.).

⁶ No. 109, July 5, 1711 (S.).

gallery. He might have been the same individual that Overbury portrayed :

" But the next Heir that possessed it was this soft Gentleman, whom you see there : Observe the small Buttons, the little Boots, the Laces, the Slashes about his Cloaths, and above all the Posture he is drawn in, (which to be sure was his own choosing ;) you see he sits with one Hand on a Desk writing, and looking as it were another way, like an easy Writer, or a Sonneteer : He was one of those that had too much Wit to know how to live in the World ; he was a Man of no Justice, but great good Manners ; he ruined every Body that had anything to do with him, but never said a rude thing in his Life ; the most indolent Person in the World, he would sign a Deed that passed away half his Estate with his Gloves on, but would not put on his Hat before a Lady if it were to save his Country. He is said to be the first that made Love by squeezing the Hand. He left the Estate with ten thousand Pounds Debt upon it, but however by all Hands I have been informed that he was every way the finest Gentleman in the World."

It would be possible to show interesting points of similarity between the character of Will Wimble¹ and Earle's " Younger Brother,"² or that of the " perverse Widow "³ and the " Widdows " of the " characterists," but perhaps enough has been said to show that by the genius of Addison and Steele " character-writings " were undergoing great changes and rapidly entering another branch of literature altogether. On the other hand, the indebtedness of the Essayists to the earlier writers is evinced by two passages apparently borrowed from Overbury but turned into the " Spectator's " own magnificent prose. Thus Steele says that Captain Sentry

" is never over-bearing, though accustomed to command Men in the utmost Degree below him ; nor ever too obsequious, from a Habit of obeying Men highly above him." ⁴

¹ No. 108, July 4, 1711 (A.).

² Mic. (Arber), No. 8, pp. 29, 30.

³ " Spectator," No. 118, July 16, 1711 (S.). Other " characters " well developed in the " Club " are : *Will Honeycomb*, a " Woman-killer," who has been " eight and forty above these twelve years," but who ultimately marries a farmer's daughter. Cf. Nos. 4, 151, 156, 311, 359, 530. *Sir Andrew Freeport*, a " Worthy Citizen," cf. 82, 174, 232, 549. *Captain Sentry*, cf. 152, 197, 350, 544.

⁴ " Spectator," No. 2, March 2, 1711 (S.).

The "noble Spirit" we are told

"gouverneth and obeyeth with one countenance; for it comes from one consideration."¹

A sentence occurring in the "excellent Actor" seems to have been in Addison's mind, when he wrote:

"A Sermon repeated after this Manner, is like the Composition of a Poet in the Mouth of a graceful Actor."²

The words of the older writer are:

"Hee addes grace to the Poets labours: for what in the Poet is but ditty, in him is both ditty and musicke."

In the "Tatler" already short series of essays had appeared which were grouped round some central figure, Jenny Distaff for instance. But this was carried to a much greater extent in the "Spectator," where the doings of the "Club" form a loosely connected tale, which might easily be called "Sir Roger de Coverley."³ More than mere short episodes have been treated; we are given an insight into the lives of the "characters" drawn, and are told of their later fortunes.

This marks the greatest innovation in "character-writing" that had been made. Originally it had been the wish of "characterists" only to delineate the different qualities possessed by a certain kind of man; his experiences in life were outside the scope of these essays. The exclusion of these experiences disappoints the reader, who just becomes interested in the creation of the character-writer. This statement can be made clearer by a comparison. We read the "character" of a man—we are introduced to him. But as neither his name is revealed, nor any of his history imparted to us, all further intercourse is rendered impossible, and he remains a mere casual acquaintance who passes out of our ken. But the Spectator carefully introduces the members of his club to us. These

¹ Hall's "Valiant Man" "commands without tyranny and imperiousness, obeys without servility, and changes not his mind with his estate." Cf. p. 52.

² "Spectator," No. 106, July 2, 1711 (A.).

³ Not much more coherent is "Pickwick," though considered a novel.

gentlemen are communicative ; in the course of time they become our friends, whose weal or woe is for us a matter of moment.

Steele and his coadjutors were however much indebted to the "character-writers," who supplied them with the foundations on which they built their elegant superstructures. By making use of the analytical writers of the seventeenth century they introduce the psychological element into a loosely connected story. The influence of the "Tatler" and "Spectator" on the Georgian novelists was enormous. Henceforth, whatever the "adventures" or "plot" may be, the character of the hero of the story must be clearly drawn and consistently maintained in all his words and acts. Doomed was the old "romance" of adventure, in which the chief persons were but puppets in the tale-teller's hands, mere figures roughly hewn according to some general pattern ("Schablone"). The development of character has taken the place once held by the inordinate mass of incoherent, improbable, often utterly impossible adventure. The "plot" has been curtailed, but made plausible. The novel desires to be a mirror of life as it is, rather than as it might be.

In a work treating mainly of Overbury's Characters it would be too great a digression to speak of the influence of Addison and Steele on Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and all the noble host of English novelists.

Not only did "character-writing" influence the development of the English novel, but in the eighteenth century began to repay its debt to the drama by supplying figures for the stage.¹ Thus Dr. Johnson's "Suspirius, the human Screech-owl" reappeared as Croaker in Goldsmith's comedy "The Good-natured Man."²

¹ Cf. E. C. Baldwin's article in *Mod. Lang. Notes* (1901), xvi. p. 384 ff. entitled: "Ben Jonson's Indebtedness to the Greek Character-Sketch." The writer states: "Jonson's experiment in adapting the Greek character-sketch to dramatic treatment was repeated by later dramatists, who used the English character-sketch in the same way. Thus Goldsmith, to mention but a single instance, made one of Doctor Johnson's character-sketches the basis of the character of Croaker in his *Good-Natured Man* (acted 1768)."

² Cf. note 41, *ibid.*, and Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson* (Dent, Everyman

That "character-writing," though merged in the novel, is not quite obsolete as a separate branch of literature, is evinced by Leigh Hunt's "Essays," amongst which genuine "characters" appear. As "The Old Gentleman," "The Old Lady," "The Waiter," "Of Sticks," "Seamen on Shore" might be quoted. Except that he treated his subjects sympathetically, Leigh Hunt wrote his essays in much the same spirit in which Overbury and Earle drew their "characters."¹ But one searches in vain among the seventeenth century "character-writings" for that gentle humour with which Leigh Hunt's work abounds.

Dickens, too, must be numbered among the "characterists." His "Sketches by Boz" in the opening chapters of "Our Parish" contain the "characters" of "The Beadle," "The Parish Engine," "The School-master," "The Curate," "The Old Lady," "The Half-Pay Captain." A later portion of this book is called "Characters," but the essays in it diverge further from the original conception of "character-writing" than those mentioned above.

But sketches such as might have been written by a seventeenth century author are not infrequently found embedded in novels, though of course the tendency is to evolve the character of the person described out of his words and actions.

The nearest approach to a collection of "characters" written in fairly recent times is to be found in the "Book of Snobs." However Thackeray did not go for his models beyond the limits of the eighteenth century literature he loved so well. One instance, found at haphazard, will illustrate the point.²

"Yonder comes Captain Bull, spick and span, tight and trim, who travels for four or six months every year of his life; who does not commit himself by luxury of raiment or insolence of demeanour,

Series, i. 126): "This he has done very strongly in his character of Suspirius (No. 55, Rambler), from which Goldsmith took that of Croaker, in his comedy of "The Good-natured Man," as Johnson told me he acknowledged to him, and which is, indeed, very obvious."

¹ But cf. Earle's "downe-right Scholler" (20), "modest man" (55), and "good old Man" (65), as well as some of Overbury's 'good' men or women.

² Thackeray: "Book of Snobs," Chap. XXI.

but I think is as great a Snob as any man on board. Bull passes the season in London, sponging for dinners, and sleeping in a garret near his Club. Abroad, he has been everywhere ; he knows the best wine at every inn in every capital in Europe ; lives with the best English company there ; has seen every palace and picture-gallery from Madrid to Stockholm ; speaks an abominable little jargon of half a dozen languages—and knows nothing—nothing. Bull hunts tufts on the Continent, and is a sort of amateur courier.” etc.

But Thackeray’s Snobs, although some, like Captain Bull, are left in “character-outline” only, usually are accompanied by anecdote, or become the main figures of a short story.¹

At the present time the “character-sketch” seems to find greater favour in America than in England. Mark Twain has written an amusing article, “Concerning Chambermaids,” quite in the spirit of Overbury and Earle ; and if the former states

“these *Chambermaydes* are like Lotteryes, you may drawe twenty, ere one worth any thing.”

the modern humorist declares

“They (*i.e.* the Chambermaids) do all the mean things they can think of, and they do them out of pure cussedness, and nothing else.

Chambermaids are dead to every human instinct.”

A book that has considerable vogue² is “Mr. Dooley in Peace and in War.” It contains essays approaching the “character-sketch” ; of which the chapter “On the French Character” is the best instance.

As “characters” still find many readers, it may be supposed that this literary genus, which took firm root in England mainly through the popularity of Overbury’s book, will not disappear entirely in the immediate future.

¹ Thus Major Ponto and family ; cf. “Book of Snobs,” Chapters XXIV. to XXXI.

² Its popularity will probably be short-lived on account of the barbarity of the language employed and the passing interest in many of the topics discussed.

CHAPTER IX

LIST OF THE EDITIONS OF OVERBURY'S "CHARACTERS"

SEVERAL editions of Overbury's Works passed the press ; most of them are preserved in the British Museum. The first ten are the most important, as fresh "characters" were added to almost every impression up to and including the ninth, whilst the tenth frequently presents better readings.

The first impression of Overbury's "Wife" does not contain the "Characters." Copies exist in the Bodleian Library, and among Capell's books in Trinity College, Cambridge. It was printed in London, 1614, 8o.

The "Characters" appear in the following :—

- ii. 1614.
4° A Wife | Novv | *The Widdow* | of | Sir Thomas Over-
burys. | Being | A most exquisite and singular Poem | of
the choice of a Wife. | Wherevnto are added | many witty
Characters, and conceited | *Newes, written by himselfe and*
other | learned Gentlemen his | friends. | Dignum laude
virum musa velat mori, | Cœlo musa beat. Hor: car:
lib. 3. | London | Printed for *Lawrence Lisle*, and are to bee
sold at his | shop in *Paules Church-yard*, at the signe of |
the *Tigers head*. 1614.

The copy in the British Museum is unique. It is marked C. 34. f. 7, and is a thin quarto, the title-page of which has been torn, but is well mended. Originally it contained as frontispiece the portrait of Sir Thomas Overbury, which however is lost. The numeration of the pages (by a later hand) commencing at 27 may be accounted for by the fact that this book was originally bound in with another, which then bore the B.M. mark 1077. h. 6.

The publisher's preface is dated May 16th, 1614.

The "characters" contained are :

A good Woman ; A very very Woman ; Her next part ; A

EDITIONS OF OVERBURY'S CHARACTERS 167

Dissembler ; A Courtier ; A golden Asse ; A Flatterer ; An ignorant glory-hunter ; A Tymist ; An Amorist ; An affected Traueller ; A Wise-man ; A noble Spirit ; An old Man ; A Country Gentleman ; A fine Gentleman ; An elder Brother ; A Welchman ; A Pedant ; A Seruingman ; An Host ; An Ostler.

The Third Edition. Title page as Second Impression as iii. 1614.
far as *Dignum*, etc. | The third Impression ; With addition
of | sundry other new Characters. | London | Printed by
Edward Griffin for *Laurence Lisle*, and | are to be sold in
Paules Church-yard, at | the *Tigers head*, 1614. |
4°

According to Collier's "Bridgewater Catalogue," p. 223, this edition should include twenty-five "characters," thus four more than the Second Impression.¹ After two careful searches I failed to find any new matter in the copy preserved in the British Museum.

The Fourth Impression was inaccessible to me, but iv. 1614.
Rimbault² writes of it as follows :
4°

"The Fourth Impression, enlarged with more Characters than any of the former editions. *London, Printed by G. Eld, for Lawrence Lisle, etc. 1614, 4o.* Contains thirty characters and seventeen pieces of news. On Sign F² "The Character of a Happy Life, by H. W." (Sir Henry Wotton). This edition is described, by T. Park, in a very imperfect notice of Overbury's Works, in the *Censura Literaria*, vol. v. p. 363, edit. 1807. A copy is preserved among Capell's books in Trinity College, Cambridge."

Thus this impression would seem to tally almost completely with :

The Fifth Impression. The title-page as in former v. 1614.
editions, but : The fift Impression, enlarged with more
Characters | *than any of the former Editions.* | London |
Printed by *T. C.* for *Laurence Lisle*, and are | to be sold
in *Paules Chur-chyard*, at the *Tygres-head*. 1614.
4°

The Publisher's preface is dated Aug. 24th. ; the only "character" that could have been added is that of the "meere Common Lawyer." The print is smaller and the orthography worse than

¹ Collier counted the "very very Woman" and "Her next part" as one "character."

² Cf. Rimbault : Overbury ; Reeves and Turner, 1890. pp. xv. xvi.

in the second or third impressions. Not having a copy of the fourth at my disposal I have noted these ten additional "characters":

A good Wife; A Melancholy Man; A Saylor; A Souldier; A Taylor; a Puritane; A Whoore; A very Whore; A meere Common Lawyer; the Character | of a happy life. By H. W. (Except in the following edition—thus in vii. ix. x—the "happy life" is placed at the end of the "Characters").

- vi. 1615.
8° New | and choise | Characters, | *of seuerall Authors*: | Together with that exquisite and | *vnmatcht Poeme*, | the | Wife, | Written by Syr *Thomas Ouerburie*. | With the former Characters and concei | *ted Newes*, All in one volume. With many other things added to this | sixth Impression. | Mar.—*non norunt hæc monumenta mori*. | London. | Printed by *Thomas Creede* for *Laurence L'isle*, at the Tygers head in Pauls | Church-yard. 1615.

After a new Publisher's preface the "Wife" and the "Characters" appear in the same order as in previous impressions; the new material is thus introduced:

- vi. a. An | Addition | of other Chara | cters, or liuely De |
scriptions of Persons. | (* *)

This "Addition" was printed consecutively with the older "characters," as can be seen in the signatures. These run as follows: A, A2, A3, A4, then four unsigned leaves, B, B2, etc. The new Titlepage and "meere Scholer" occur on the third unsigned leaf after G4, and the fresh material fills the pages till after H3, which is followed by one unsigned leaf only. The Addition consists of ten "characters," viz.:

A meere Scholer; A Tinker; An Apparatur; An Almanack-maker;¹ An Hypocrite; A Maquerela, in plain English a Bawd; A Chamber-maide; A Precisian; A Fantasticke Innes of Court man; A meere Fellow of an House.

- vi. b. Bound in the same book, but printed later than the ten "characters" above is a further supplement.

¹ After this "character" was inserted "¶ Certaine Edicts from a Parliament in Eupotia (sic); Written by Lady Southwell." This article occupied four pages. It does not seem to have always been reprinted in subsequent impressions.

After the pages signed H, H2, H3, H4, etc., follow g, g², g³, g⁴, with but three unsigned leaves following, then I, I2, etc. regularly to M4 with the usual complement of unsigned leaves. On the page signed I a new titlepage was issued :

New | Characters | (drawne to the | life) of seuerall persons, in | seuerall qualities | (* *) | London. | Printed¹ for L. L'isle. | 1615.

Then follow :

A worthy Commander in the Warres ; a vaine-glorious Coward in Command ; A Pyrate ; An ordinary Fencer ; A Puny-Clarke ; A Foote-man ; A noble and retir'd Housekeeper ; An Intruder into fauour ; A fayre and happy Milke-mayd ; An arrant Horse-courser ; A Roaring Boy ; A drunken Dutch-man resident in England ; A Phantastique. | An Improuident young Gallant ; A Button-maker of Amsterdame ; A Distaster of the Time ; A fellow of a House ; A meere Pettyfogger ; An Ingrosser of Corne ; A Diuellish Vsurer ; A Water-man ; A Reuerend Iudge ; A vertuous Widdow ; An ordinarie Widdow ; A Quacksaluer ; A Canting Rogue ; A French Cooke ; A Sexton ; A Iesuite ; An excellent Actor ; A Franklin ; A Purueiour of Tobacco ; A Rimer.

Sir *Thomas Ouerburie* | His Wife, | With | New Elegies | vii. 1616.
8°
vpon his (now knowne) | *vntimely death*. | Wherevnto are annexed new Newes | and Characters, written by him | selfe & other learned | Gentlemen. | Editio Septima. | London. | Printed by *Edward Griffin* for *Laurence L'isle*, | and are to bee sold at his shop at the | *Tigers head* in *Pauls Church-yard*. 1616. |

In spite of its claim no new "characters" appeared in this edition. Possibly when the "sixt impression" made its appearance the second "Addition" had not yet entirely left the press, but was issued as a supplementary pamphlet. In the "Editio Septima" all the "characters" which had already appeared in print occur again in their traditional order, except the "Purueiour of Tobacco," which was suppressed. Also a virulent and coarse paragraph contained in the "excellent Actor" was withdrawn.

The Eighth Impression. Not in the British Museum. viii. 1616.
8°
Probably similar to the "Editio Septima"; according to Rimbault it contains the same number of pages, viz., 292.

¹ By T. C. = Thomas Creede (?), as a quaint woodcut shows.

- ix. 1616.
8°. *The Ninth Impression:* Sir Thomas Ouerbury | His | Wife. | With | Addition of | many new Elegies vpon his | vntimely and much lamented death. | As also | New Newes, and diuers more Characters | (neuer before annexed) written by him | selfe and other learned Gentlemen. | The ninth impression Augmented. | London. | Printed | by *Edward Griffin* for *Laurence L'isle*, and | are to be sold at his shop at the *Tigers head* in | *Paules Church yard*. 1616.

Twice printed in 1616. Its punctuation is faulty, especially in the nine additional "characters," which are:

A Couetous man; the proud Man; a Prison; A Prisoner; A Creditour; a Sarieant; His Yeoman; A common cruell Iaylour; What a Character is.

- x. 1618.
8°. *The Tenth Impression:* Sir Thomas Ouerbury | His | Wife | With | Additions | of New Newes | and diuers more Characters | (neuer before annexed) written by | himselfe and other learned | Gentlemen. | The tenth impression augmented. | London | Printed by *Edward Griffin* for *Laurence L'isle*, and | are to be sold at his shop at the *Tigers head* in | *Pauls Church-yard*. 1618. |

In a copy of the 16th impression (1632) in the British Museum a MS. note by W. Ford states "10" (*i.e.* the tenth impression) "in 1618 with Head." There is no portrait to be found in this edition, though there was in the second.

Since the tenth impression Overbury's works were frequently reprinted during the seventeenth century, but the "Characters" have undergone no change except that of spelling. Following editions (all 8o.) are to be found in the British Museum:

- xi. 1622. *The Eleventh Impression.* Printed for L. Lisle, London, 1622.
- xii. 1626. *The Twelfth Impression.* Imprinted by the Company of Stationers, Dublin, 1626.

W. Ford denotes copies of this edition as being "very scarce" in his MS. Notes, cf. Fifteenth Impression.

1627. *The "Twelfth Impression."* Printed by J. T. for R. Swayne, London, 1627 (12o.).

The B.M. copy contains a few MS. notes by Dr. Bliss.

The Thirteenth Impression. Printed for R. Allot, London, xiii. 1628. 1628.

The Fourteenth Impression. Printed for R. Allot, London, xiv. 1630. 1630.

The Fifteenth Impression. Printed by R. B. for R. xv. 1632. Allot, London, 1632.

The copy in the British Museum contains some MS. notes by T. Park and W. Ford. Some have been quoted; the most important are those referring to the imitations of Overbury's "Wife."

The Sixteenth Impression. Printed by J. Haviland for xvi. 1638. A. Croke, London, 1638. Contains the "character" of "A Dunce."

[*Another edition.*] London, 1655. 1655.

Probably identical with the "Seventeenth Impression, London, 1655," a copy of which is kept (according to Rimbault) in the Douce Collection."

The Seventeenth Impression. London, 1664. xvii. 1664.

Perhaps the edition above was unauthorised.

During the eighteenth century the "Characters" seem to have been issued but once, in a careless reprint of the ninth impression, called :

"The Tenth Edition, London. Printed for W. Owen, at Homer's Head, near Temple Bar," 1756.¹

The poem of "The Wife" was more fortunate.

Overbury has in the nineteenth century been edited by E. F. Rimbault, who based his text on the ninth impression, 1616, but did not make an exact reproduction of it.² His reprint first appeared in 1856, and again in 1890. It contains a portrait frontispiece of Sir Thomas Overbury.

Furthermore selected "characters" have been reprinted in :

"A Book of Characters," etc., 1865, 80.

¹ Cf. Rimbault: Overbury's Works, Reeves & Turner, 1890, p. xix.

² Rimbault states that there were two issues of the ninth impression in 1616. I have seen only one of them, viz., the copy in the British Museum. Perhaps text-variants occurred in both issues.

"A Mirror of Character," etc., 1869, 8o.

"Character-Writings of the XVII. Century." H. Morley.
Routledge, 1891.¹

"Famous Books" by W. Davenport Adams (Glaisher,
London, undated). The study on Overbury contained in this volume is very superficial.

¹ The language is modernized, but misprints (or mistakes?) render some passages obscure.

CURRICULUM VITAE

I, *Charles Edward Gough*, a British subject, domiciled in Leeds (England), was born on July 12th, 1874, as eldest son of Archibald Edward Gough, M.A. (Professor and later Principal of Allahabad University, retired since 1894, and resident at Myross, Weston-super-Mare, England), and of his first wife, Amelia Luisa (deceased 1884), the daughter of the Rev. C. B. Leupolt.

From 1881-1891 I received my education in England, mainly at private schools in London, but in the autumn of the latter year was admitted to the 1.B. class of the Upper *Gymnasium* of Basle, and educated there from Nov., 1891—March, 1895. On March 30th, 1895, I left this School with the *Maturitätszeugnis*, and immatriculated during the summer semester at the *University of Basle*, where I attended the lectures of Prof. Dr. phil. R. Kogel, Prof. Dr. phil. A. Socin, Prof. Dr. phil. G. Binz, Prof. Dr. phil. G. Soldan, and Prof. Dr. phil. F. Heman; I also took part in the work of the *Germanistic Seminar* under the direction of Prof. Dr. phil. R. Kogel and Prof. Dr. phil. G. Binz, of the *Romance Seminar* under Prof. Dr. phil. G. Soldan, as well as of the *Pædagogic Seminar* under Prof. Dr. phil. F. Heman.

At the end of the winter semester 1898-99 I presented myself or examination as a *Kandidat des Lehramtes* and obtained the *Diplom für die mittlere Schulstufe* on March 18th, 1899.

After holding masterships in Swiss and English schools I was in January, 1903, offered the Assistant Lectureship in German at the University of Leeds. This post, which I still hold, has enabled me to continue my linguistic studies. At the University of Leeds I attended the lectures and tutorial classes of Prof. F. Moorman, Ph.D., M.A. (English), Prof. C. E. Vaughan, M.A. (English), Prof. Dr. phil. A. W. Schüddekopf (German) and Prof. J. Clapham, M.A. (Economics). At the suggestion of Prof. F. Moorman I studied the English "Character-writers," and selected Overbury as the subject of this dissertation, which, presented in 1908 to the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Basle, has undergone a careful revision and been augmented by the addition of fresh material under the kind guidance and supervision of Prof. Dr. G. Binz.

